

**Highland Fire District
Regular Meeting
June 9, 2026
7:00PM – St #1 – 25 Milton Avenue, Highland**

Commissioners:	Kevin Rizzo	(PRESENT)
	James Anzalone, Jr	(ABSENT)
	Alan Barone	(PRESENT)
	Charly Long	(PRESENT)
	Gina Hansut	(PRESENT)
District Secretary:	Leslie B. Benson	(PRESENT)
District Treasurer:	Fred DeMaio	(PRESENT)
Assistant Chief:	Nathan Peura	(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. **New Members:** Tonight Commissioner Rizzo welcomed Sean Daly and Joseph Pearson. He said they both met with the Hose Company and asked if either had questions. There were no questions from either candidate. Assistant Chief Gallagher added they both will do exceptionally well and will be an asset. After tonight, Chief DiMetro will have you schedule a physical with FirstCare and upon completion of the physical, you will have orientation and equipment will be issued.

Motion: Commissioner Long moved to approve Sean Daly and Joseph Pearson as a probationary active member, dependent on passing their physicals, seconded by Commissioner Hansut

Vote: 4 Yes 0 No 0 Abstain 1 Absent (Commissioner Anzalone)

Motion was carried. Congratulations!

Tonight, we welcomed back Terry Elia to the Hose Company.

Motion: Commissioner Long moved to approve Life member status to Active membership to Terry Elia, seconded by Commissioner Barone

Vote: 4 Yes 0 No 0 Abstain 1 Absent (Commissioner Anzalone)

Motion was carried. Welcome back!

2. **Presentation from Focused Wealth Management & Firefly along with Scholarship presentation – Ladders to Learning**

Craig Relyea from Firefly started off, they are the administrators and actuaries for LOSAP. He went over the benefit structure and entitlement age is 55. Each year a member can earn 50 points towards service credits. He explained what firefly does and how the plan works. The number of years is 50 yr maximum. The projected amounts capture any increases and those potentially who will start to collect. The district has an obligation to fund promised benefits. We started in 1998 with a 5-year buyback. Should we entertain, 40-year plan to 50-year? We are governed by law to make contribution every year. We want to keep pace of benefits with the membership. We have 15 or more that will reach 55 within 2-3 years of each other. Firefly

has no concerns on their end. Phil DeAngelo from Focused Wealth explained the market and spoke of the interest rates. He explained our account starting from February and companies are looking for investment opportunities. We are 60% invested/40% fixed. They have been aggressive and been working the investment. He referred to pages 25-27 balanced snapshot with favorable sectors. Matt explained the portfolio plan, if there are any additional questions, please let them know.

Focus Wealth Management presented their Ladders to Learning Scholarship, they started this new opportunity to support districts about 3 years ago giving back to the community. The scholarships are intended for use toward qualifying educational endeavors. They provide 2- \$250.00 scholarships for members or members' children continuing education. This year's recipient is Logan Carle who will be attending Marist College. Commissioner Rizzo added, "we are very proud of what you've done so far and you're doing a great job". Congratulations.

3. Approval of Minutes

Chairman Rizzo asked for approval of the regular meeting minutes on **May 12, 2026**.

Motion: Commissioner Hansut moved to approve minutes from May 12, 2026, seconded by Commissioner Long

Vote: 3 Yes 0 No 1 Abstain (Commissioner Barone) 1 Absent (Commissioner Anzalone)
Motion was carried.

Chairman Rizzo asked for approval of the Special Meeting – Capital Improvement Project meeting minutes on **May 26, 2026**.

Motion: Commissioner Barone moved to approve minutes from May 26, 2026, seconded by Commissioner Long

Vote: 4 Yes 0 No 0 Abstain 1 Absent (Commissioner Anzalone)
Motion was carried.

4. Authorization to Pay Bills

Chairman Rizzo presented the abstract for 5/26/2026 – 6/9/2026

Prepays	\$ 4,011.57
Late arrivals	\$ 1,938.90
Abstract	<u>\$ 38,253.71</u>
Subtotal	<u>\$ 44,204.18</u>
Hold inv	<u>\$ - 60.00</u>
Total	\$ 44,144.18

Chairman Rizzo asked for approval to pay the bills as reviewed by Commissioners Anzalone, Commissioner Rizzo and Assistant Chief Gallagher on Monday, June 8, 2026, totaling \$44,144.18 from 5/26/2026 – 6/9/2026.

Motion: Commissioner Long moved to approve payment of the abstract of bills totaling \$44,144.18 seconded by Commissioner Hansut

Vote: 4 Yes 0 No 0 Abstain 1 Absent (Commissioner Anzalone)
Motion was carried.

5. **Correspondence:**

- Red Cross Blood Drive is Friday, June 19, 2026, from 12 noon – 5PM
- The Highland Village Nursery School graduation ceremony will be Saturday, June 13, 2026, from 8:30am – 12 noon. They will be here on Friday with ceremony practice as well as decorating from 3-5PM.
- Highland High School Annual Senior Walk breakfast will be Tuesday, 6/16/26 from 7:30am – 9:30am.
- Thank you letter to Frank Sorbello for their flower donation for St 1 & 2 for Memorial Day planting

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

6. **Committee Reports:**

Building & Grounds, St #1 – Commissioners Barone and Long

Commissioner Barone advised BT Plumbing fixed a leak in the bay near 31-11 and 31-45 – it wasn't the roof but apparatus feed and completed on 6/3/26
Repair at Town of Lloyd Police – Ladies bathroom was completed on 6/4/26.

V-Fire Grant – We are still in the queue, hopefully we will hear something mid-June. Since we haven't heard anything – we are still being considered.

Reserved Parking Signs: Commissioner Long installed 3 signs for firefighter parking. He is waiting on breakaway kits and hardware.

St #1 Monument/Landscaping – this project will be in conjunction to cleaning up the red rocks. Top Seed was called and they highly suggested installing the mailbox first

IT Report: Technology Upgrade Project – St#2 – items still need to be installed.

Building & Grounds, St #2 - Commissioner Rizzo and Anzalone
Technology Upgrade project was discussed.

Commissioner Rizzo advised, we met with the architect and came up with a design concept. We will look at the next phase and will have a follow-up meeting later in June or early July.

Commissioner Long said on the overhead doors the brackets on the track came loose. Tom Burke from Good 2 Go Garage Door Repair came and fixed it...he did not charge us.

Dennis Bragg also fixed the switch at St #2.

7. **Recruiting & Retention:** Commissioners Rizzo and Anzalone

Commissioner Rizzo provided an update on the 5/27/26 meeting at Wallkill High School regarding monetary compensations – Commissioners Rizzo, Anzalone and A/C Gallagher and Lt DeMaio attended this meeting. The bill presented is redlined. FASNY attended and wants NYS to pay the money, so this doesn't come out of local municipalities, this bill did not pass.

Firefighter - \$800 write off tax credit, Federal income combined with property tax, may not pass

8. **Insurance/Worker's Compensation:** Commissioners Barone and Hansut

Increased value of \$200,000.00 on selected apparatus – Commissioner Barone said the cost at the time was \$3200. Commissioner Barone feels we could keep the amounts as is and no change at this time.

9. **Service Awards:** Focus Wealth Management and Firefly presented tonight and doing well.

The board can plan for long-term future proof as in 6 ½-10 years will reach threshold. Firefly will prepare the plan and what it would entail.

10. **Ulster County Association of Fire Districts:** Next meeting is 9/17/26 at Port Ewen FD.

11. **Treasurer's Report:** Treasurer DeMaio reported for May 31, 2026

Income:	\$ 5,510.78
Expenses:	\$ 38,976.54 excludes PICK UP from 2025 surplus
Net for month	\$ -(33,465.76)

\$394,213.67 balance of 2026 budget left to spend, not counting 2025 surplus.

No red flags, and 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

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

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

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

STILL OUTSTANDING FROM LAST MONTH/YEAR: (NO CHANGE)

TREASURY DIRECT: no movement yet.

Reserve accounts were discussed and funding the SCBA Reserve. We need an apparatus replacement plan, the one received was not sufficient and needs to be revised.

Discussion: SCBA Reserve: put \$75,000.00 into the SCBA

Motion: Commissioner Long moved to approve adding \$75,000.00 into the SCBA Reserve, seconded by Commissioner Barone

Vote: 4 Yes 0 No 0 Abstain 1 Absent (Commissioner Anzalone)

Motion was carried.

Discussion: We need the revised apparatus replacement plan before we put money into the apparatus reserve

Motion: Commissioner Hansut requested to receive the revised apparatus replacement plan before money is put into the apparatus reserve seconded by Commissioner Long

Vote: 4 Yes 0 No 0 Abstain 1 Absent (Commissioner Anzalone)

Motion was carried.

Timeline for budget – Treasurer DeMaio will provide a rough spreadsheet.

Audit 2025 – We should be in good shape

Commissioner Rizzo asked about 1099's – We are doing what is required according to the law. If a 1099 is needed, they are prepared online as preparing by hand is a different process. We could hire an accountant if needed.

Chairman Rizzo asked for a motion to accept the treasurer's report for May 2026 as presented.

Motion: Commissioner Long moved to accept the treasurer's May 31, 2026, preliminary report, seconded by Commissioner Hansut.

Vote: 4 Yes 0 No 0 Abstain 1 Absent (Commissioner Anzalone)

Motion was carried.

12. **Chief's Report:**

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

31-11 will be going to Erichsen's for inspection

The Hose Co would like the commissioner's approval to hang the bunting for the 250th Anniversary.

Premier Fire Apparatus – Assistant Chief Schaeffer expressed some concerns with their service and communication with repairs. Premier has had some staff changes, and it's been difficult getting updates. We have been chasing repairs on 31-13 since April. While at Fairview, the auto-stow had some intermittent faults. The auto-stow is now out of warranty and has been a constant problem. Commissioner Rizzo will contact E-One tomorrow.

Driver training – Assistant Chief Peura advised the outline is written not finalized. They have interested drivers and the Chief's office is working on dates. We currently have 5 interested members with 1 needing EVOC/Pump Operator. There will be a bootcamp exact dates and times not final.

Gear – it is going to be expensive. We have 3 sets of gear in date. Any out-of-date gear is used for training. Assistant Chief Peura mentioned the possibility of renting. With influx of members, it will be investigated.

Gear washer – was not working and repair company contacted.

Cell phone reimbursement – If members cell phone is paid by the members business or employer, the member is ineligible to receive reimbursement. It was discussed to include all 7 officers for the \$60 stipend as long as the phone isn't paid by business or employer.

Resolution:

Motion: Commissioner Barone moved to accept the \$60.00 stipend to include all officers with the exception of those cell phones paid by business or company, seconded by Commissioner Hansut

Vote: 4 Yes 0 No 0 Abstain 1 Absent (Commissioner Anzalone)

Motion was carried.

13. Old Business:

Mailbox Update– the mailbox arrived and waiting. We are paying for 6 months for the PO box as it's due by 6/30/26.

HFD Website: We are anticipating the website in July, but it could be August/September. The .org is fully functional and ADA compliant

Fiber Optic: We received an estimate from Elevated Computing for running the fiber optic cable from the police department to fire district. The estimate is \$1700.00.

Surplus Items: We will need a list from St #1 and St #2. Commissioner Rizzo spoke with legal counsel and if there is any monetary value – we can add a list to the website to bid upon.

If items are broken, obsolete with no monetary value can be discarded.

Assistant Chief Gallagher, stated some items in training room, located 10 gallons of paint and this can be recycled at True Value, backboards don't meet NYS Department of Health.

St #2 – Storage cabinet rusted – end of life. Desk in lobby area, will be added to list to be tossed, old radio/microphone was donated by IBM.

We will get a list of items, add to the website with a picture and description when up and running – item will go to the lowest bidder than scrap.

Ice Machine – Was installed at St #2 and used for the 200 club.

Toolbox – wasn't order yet, clearing room and cleaning the cage area

Capital Project: Commissioner Rizzo asked if we should run a title search, Commissioner Barone did not think it was necessary. Commissioner Rizzo, with the wetlands, we are relatively free and clean along stream.

14. New Business:**Title Search**

Motion: Commissioner Hansut moved to approve having a title search done at St #2 property, seconded by Commissioner Long

Vote: 4 Yes 0 No 0 Abstain 1 Absent (Commissioner Anzalone)

Motion was carried.

MCS:

Commissioner Rizzo advised we had a conversation with Daniel Hopping, and he said he needed to raise our rates. We only have 1 computer with 8 to 6PM service and that is Leslie's.

Fred's requests are billable and we could put on an 8 to 6 plan, have access to service from \$79-\$129. We discussed the number of computers and they were reduced. Fred's computer guy doesn't do or manage this service. MCS provides a service with the level of protection we need. Fred reached out to another company and was not sure he would be interested in taking on our account.

MCS is a 6-man operation that contracts with other mom and pop shops.

Instead of calling, they are using a ticket service and that takes time to fix.

We will have a meeting with him in late June or July.

We may think about having a second person to handle smaller issues. Fred will continue to talk to Richard's.

St #1 Property Clean Up in Rear of building

The Chief's office has requested a cleanup with the overgrown branches and debris in the rear of the building.

Commissioner Barone said get a price from Frank Banks to cut back the branches, but not an hourly estimate.

Request for 31-12 & 31-35 to UCFTC

The request for 31-12 and 31-35 to Ulster County Fire Training Center on 6/18/26 for company training.

Motion: Commissioner Long moved to approve the apparatus request for 31-12 & 31-35 to the Ulster County Fire Training Center on 6/18/26 seconded by Commissioner Barone.

Vote: 4 Yes 0 No 0 Abstain 1 Absent (Commissioner Anzalone)

Motion was carried.

Request for Bunting

The Highland Hose Co wants to add bunting to the firehouse for the 250th Celebration to be kept up after Labor Day

Motion: Commissioner Hansut moved to approve the bunting on the firehouse, seconded by Commissioner Long

Vote: 4 Yes 0 No 0 Abstain 1 Absent (Commissioner Anzalone)

Motion was carried.

15. Liaison to Town - Supervisor Weiss not in attendance

16. 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:

Terry Elia – Wanted to thank the board for his approval to active firefighter.

Vice President, Jon Napoleon, announced on behalf of President Gaffney, they have 19 tickets to the Renegades for July 5th.

Wednesday, June 10, 2026, the Hose Co will be presenting their scholarship award at the high school.

The Hose Company would like to have family movie night at Station #2 and asked permission to use it.

Commissioners present said that it sounded nice and no permission is needed, just use it.

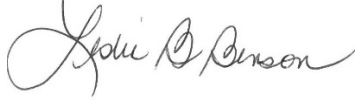
Commissioner Hansut asked with the Supervisor not in attendance what is happening with the fireworks. Discussion: The school hasn't been contacted yet and they need to get approval from school and have proper insurance. No town motion yet.

17. 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.)*

18. Adjournment:

There being no further business, Commissioner Long moved to adjourn at 9:03PM, seconded by Commissioner Barone

Respectfully submitted

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Leslie B. Benson".

Leslie B. Benson
District Secretary

DRAFT