Highland Fire District
Regular Meeting
September 15, 2026
6:30PM – St #1 – 25 Milton Avenue, Highland

Commissioners:	Kevin Rizzo	(PRESENT)
	James Anzalone, Jr	(PRESENT)
	Alan Barone	(ABSENT)
	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 6:32 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 6:33PM 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: 4 Yes 0 No 0 Abstain 1 Absent (Commissioner Barone)
   Motion was carried.

2. Motion to reconvene to business at 7:04PM by Commissioner Anzalone, seconded by Commissioner Long
   Vote: 4 Yes 0 No 0 Abstain 1 Absent (Commissioner Barone)
   Motion was carried.

3. **Presentation of 2027 Proposed Budget** (second pass) – Treasurer Fred DeMaio
   Treasurer DeMaio presented the proposed budget with different options and it just depends on the way the Board wants to go. Last year, the 2026 levy was $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 board would like to hold at 2.0% increase and would be slightly under tax levy.
   All Commissioners present agreed.
   Each category line was discussed for second pass and some changes were made.

   The 2027 Proposed Budget Hearing is scheduled for October 20, 2026.

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Motion: Commissioner Anzalone moved to reconvene to business at 8:05PM, seconded by Commissioner Long.
Vote: 4 Yes 0 No 0 Abstain 1 Absent (Commissioner Barone)
Motion was carried.

4. **Approval of Minutes**

Chairman Rizzo asked for approval of the **August 4, 2026 – Capital Project – special meeting**.
Motion: Commissioner Anzalone moved to approve minutes from August 4, 2026, seconded by Commissioner Hansut.
Vote: 4 Yes 0 No 0 Abstain 1 Absent (Commissioner Barone)
Motion was carried.

Chairman Rizzo asked for approval of the **regular meeting** on **August 11, 2026**
Motion: Commissioner Anzalone moved to approve minutes from August 11, 2026, seconded by Commissioner Long.
Vote: 4 Yes 0 No 0 Abstain 1 Absent (Commissioner Barone)
Motion was carried.

5. **Authorization to Pay Bills**

Chairman Rizzo presented the abstract for - 8/14/2026—9-15-2026

Prepays	$ 4632.14
Late arrivals	$ 1018.82
Abstract	$ 48,400.18
Total	$ 54,051.14
	$- 12,650.00 (Hold)
	$ 41,401.14

Motion: Commissioner Hansut moved to hold the Highland Water & Sewer bill – hydrant charge for $12,650.00 until we have more discussion, seconded by Commissioner Rizzo.
Vote: 4 Yes 0 No 0 Abstain 1 Absent (Commissioner Barone)
Motion was carried.

Chairman Rizzo asked for approval to pay the bills as reviewed by Commissioner Rizzo, Barone and Chief DiMetro on September 9, 2026, totaling $41,401.14 from - 8/11/2026 – 9/15/2026.

Motion: Commissioner Long moved to approve payment of the abstract of bills totaling $41,401.14 seconded by Commissioner Hansut
Vote: 4 Yes 0 No 0 Abstain 1 Absent (Commissioner Barone)
Motion was carried.

6. **Correspondence**:
   - Letter from Chief DiMetro, regarding member change of status, Terry Elia and New member activation Chris Erichsen.
   - New firefly engagement letter
   - Garone's Lawn & Landscaping – snow removal contract

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- Letter from Chief DiMetro – life to active member, John Halstead had orientation on 9/14/26.

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

3 Room requests received:
Request from Hudson Valley National Center for Veteran Reintegration – Walk a Mile in my Shoes – Veterans Walk for Suicide on September 20, 2026 – to start their walk at St #2, with use of the parking lot & pavilion area.

Request from Heather Blume on 8/14/26 from the UC Court Clerk's Association meeting on 8/27/26 from 1:00 – 2:00PM for approximately 20 participants – email vote was done.

Request from Chris Erichsen for Sunday, 9/20/26 for his daughter's baby shower from 12-6PM for approximately 25 guests.

7. **New Members**: Tonight we welcomed members, Ryan Fincham and Phil Sabarese. Commissioner Rizzo said after tonight, you will schedule a physical and once completed – orientation will be scheduled. They did not have any questions. They were interviewed and will both be assets to the department.

Motion: Commissioner Anzalone moved to approve Ryan Fincham and Phil Sabarese dependent on passing their physicals, seconded by Commissioner Hansut.
Vote: 4 Yes 0 No 0 Abstain 1 Absent (Commissioner Barone)
Motion was carried.

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

Paint Southside and front, garage doors and ballards in front. We will get 3 quotes.

Mailbox/Landscaping: The committee needs to get some ideas and present.

V-Fire Grant Project Update: Contract in portal is $1,000,000.00 and we are waiting on being awarded. Mike Gaffney heard possibly in October. We will put out to bid pending approval of grant. Could be a winter project.

IT Report: MCS – we signed a 1 year term and will monitor.
MCS provided a quote for a new router for $4906 that will be attached to fiber optics.

Chief DiMetro requested the removal of branches near entrance of Van Wagner.

Door openers coils frayed near 31-40 and 31-11 and were replaced.

Building & Grounds, St #2 - Commissioner Rizzo and Anzalone

Generator issues – problems with the motherboard and Gentech is working on this.

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

We are at 54 members.

10. **Insurance/Worker's Compensation**: Commissioners Barone and Hansut
Leslie advised we had 3 claims from July – September 2026. We have 2 worker's compensation cases open from 2025.

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 if anyone is available.

13. **Treasurer's Report**:
Treasurer DeMaio emailed the financial report for August 2026.
The actual amount levied by taxes and remaining at 2% will be $1,342,798.00 with the 2027 proposed budget being $1,471,706.00. (a difference of $1798.00 to be added to gear)

No outstanding CD's, they all came due.
No issues perceived or expected but dependent on the St #2 project expenses (soft costs).
Summary balances for Apparatus, Building and SCBA were discussed.

The 2027 Proposed budget is $1,471,706.00 and the amount to be levied by taxes will be $1,342,798.00

14. **Chief's Report**:
Report emailed to all commissioners and if there are any questions, please let him know.

Campbell Supply was contacted to perform maintenance on 31-12 and 31-60. 31-60 belt tensioner and 31-12 compressor issue. We are still using the other vendors, we want to add this vendor as others are backlogged.

Fire Prevention is scheduled with daycares, elementary school and will be extremely busy.

ID Cards – working on a final version in October. We decided to go with RFID cards and will not update every year, possibly every 5 years.

We have some members working from home and working from the station.
Officers would like to put a small desk in the ready room, Chief will be getting estimates.

Wreath Across America – will be using the parking lot at St #1 on 12/19 to deliver wreaths

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Alzheimer's Walk on 10/17 requested EMT's as they contracted with New Paltz Rescue, 31-90 to assist.

15. Old Business:

HFD Website: We met on 9/3/26 and Leslie will get pictures to the Town as Sharan is the point person. Additional Cost that features member exclusive use, where we will add content for members to access using a username and password – protected site. Have a link to new member applications.

.Gov – Still being worked on

Fiber Optics: MCS will be working on the fiber optic

31-45 Auto Stow –Assistant Chief Schaeffer created a log

Policies that are being worked on: travel, credit card, accident and photo policy.

Chairman Rizzo read the Photography and Electronic imaging policy.
Leslie will send this policy to legal counsel for review.

Router – will wait on this

Capital Project: Still working on

Sorbello removed debris as anything with no monetary value can be discarded. Cleaned up St 1 & 2.

16. New Business:

Approval of Travel & Expense Reimbursement Policy
We sent this policy to be reviewed by legal counsel, and he made a small change under accident reporting and notification requirement.
Motion: Commissioner Anzalone moved to accept the travel and expense reimbursement policy as reviewed by legal counsel, seconded by Commissioner Long
Vote: 4 Yes 0 No 0 Abstain 1 Absent (Commissioner Barone)
Motion was carried.

Adopt/Approve 2027 Proposed Budget

Treasurer DeMaio – We had our second pass earlier tonight and had additional discussion on the 2027 Proposed budget.

Treasurer DeMaio will submit the 2027 Proposed Budget to the Town. The total proposed operating budget is $1,471,706.00 and proposed budget to be raised by real estate taxes is $1,342,798.00.

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MOTION: Commissioner Anzalone moved to approve the 2027 Proposed Budget with a total proposed operating budget of $1,471,706.00 and with a $1,342,798.00 to be raised by real property taxes seconded by Commissioner Hansut.

When the Board was polled the vote was as follows:

Commissioner Kevin Rizzo	Aye / Nay / Absent
Commissioner James Anzalone, Jr.	Aye / Nay / Absent
Commissioner Alan Barone	Aye / Nay / Absent
Commissioner Charly Long	Aye / Nay / Absent
Commissioner Gina Hansut	Aye / Nay / Absent

Motion Carried.

Authorization to hold 2025 Proposed Budget hearing on October 20, 2026

Motion: Commissioner Hansut moved to hold the 2027 Proposed Budget public hearing on Tuesday, October 20, 2026, at 7PM at headquarters, seconded by Commissioner Long.

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

Garone's Landscaping – Snow Removal – Renewal Contract – 2026-2029, 3-year contract

Pricing discussed for each station for snow removal and salt.

We would like them to state in the contract, the number of inches that qualifies as a storm and would like a separate quote for snow removal off site if needed.
We will hold off until next month.

Approval of Firefly – Renewal contract, 2027-2029, 3-year contract

The standard annual fee is $5900.00 with additional administrative costs of $1524.40 for a total of $7424.40.
Motion: Commissioner Anzalone moved to approve the 3-year contract renewal to Firefly, seconded by Commissioner Long.
Vote: 4 Yes 0 No 0 Abstain 1 Absent (Commissioner Barone)
Motion was carried.

Mission Statement: Commissioner Rizzo read the mission statement, and vision.

Authorization of Campbell as approved vendor

Motion: Commissioner Long moved to approve Campbell Supply as an approved vendor seconded by Commissioner Hansut
Vote: 4 Yes 0 No 0 Abstain 1 Absent (Commissioner Barone)
Motion was carried.

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8th Grade Field Trip - Refreshments

The 8th grade class will be coming to the firehouse on 9/30/26, pizza and water will be purchased for lunch.

Motion: Commissioner Anzalone moved to approve expenses not to exceed $1000.00, seconded by Commissioner Hansut

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

Motion was carried.

Three (3) Room Requests for Community Room

Request from Hudson Valley National Center for Veteran Reintegration – Walk a Mile in my Shoes – Veterans Walk for Suicide on September 20, 2026 – to start their walk at St #2, with use of the parking lot & pavilion area.

Request from Heather Blume on 8/14/26 from the UC Court Clerk's Association meeting on 8/27/26 from 1:00 – 2:00PM for approximately 20 participants – email vote was done.

Request from Chris Erichsen for Sunday, 9/20/26 for his daughter's baby shower from 12-6PM for approximately 25 guests.

Motion: Commissioner Anzalone moved to approve the 3 requests seconded by Commissioner Long

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

Motion was carried.

Acceptance of Treasurer's Report for August 2026

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

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

Motion was carried.

17. **Liaison to Town -** Supervisor Weiss

Clintondale – No updates, Chief DiMetro and Commissioner Rizzo to meet with Clintondale commissioners.

Water bill – Commissioner Rizzo went over ISO ratings through insurance. 1 is the best, 2 is the best we could achieve, and we are on the cusp of 3. The hold back is the hydrant testing. The hydrant dictates what apparatus is used. The hydrant testing benefits the Town. If possible, get the hydrant tested this year. Ideally, get all tested properly, painted, numbered and added to GIS system.

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;

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- 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:
Mike Gaffney reported 200 Club is 10/18/26 and tickets are being distributed
He also stated the Renegades outing went well

Hose Company Insurance – Commissioner Rizzo confirmed the Hose Company is an approved policyholder. There are some exceptions under the policy. Please let the Chairman know of events.

19. Executive Session:
Commissioner Anzalone requested executive session regarding personnel at 9:26PM, Executive Session with the Board, Chief for the purpose of discussing 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; Motion: Commissioner Anzalone moved to approve executive session request to discuss personnel matters at 9:26PM, seconded by Commissioner Long.

The board will not reconvene.

20. Adjournment:
There being no further business, Commissioner Anzalone moved to adjourn at 9:26PM , seconded by Commissioner Long.

Respectfully submitted

Leslie B. Benson
District Secretary

APPROVED BOFC 10/13/2026

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