

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF HIGHLAND PARK, TEXAS, HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, 4700 DREXEL DRIVE, HIGHLAND PARK, TX, 75205, AT 8:00 A.M. ON TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2025.

Mayor Will C. Beecherl, Mayor Pro Tem Don Snell, and Council Members Alan Friedman, Marc Myers, Lydia Novakov, and Leland White attended the meeting.

- I. Mayor Will C. Beecherl called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.
- II. Council Member Alan Friedman gave the Invocation.
- III. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Beecherl asked if anyone wished to address the Town Council about any item listed on the agenda and explained that the Town Council may not discuss or make decisions on items not listed on the agenda. Public comments are limited to three minutes per speaker unless otherwise required by law. Items suggested for action may be placed on a future agenda at the Town Council's discretion. There was no comment.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

On a motion made by Council Member Lydia Novakov, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Don Snell, the Town Council voted unanimously to approve Items A. through D. on the Consent Agenda. Prior to the vote, Mayor Beecherl explained that all items under the Consent Agenda are considered routine or discussed at a previous meeting. There will be no separate discussion of items unless a request by a Council Member is made prior to the Town Council voting on the motion.

- A. *Take action to authorize the Town Administrator to execute renewals with Cigna for employee medical, dental, and vision insurance plans and with Dearborn National for employer-paid and supplemental (voluntary) life, accidental death and dismemberment, and long-term disability plans for Fiscal Year 2025-26.*
- B. *Take action on the revised and updated Library Master Plan document for FY 2026-2028.*
- C. *Take action on the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on August 19, 2025.*
- D. *Take action on the minutes of the Town Council study session held on August 19, 2025.*

V. PUBLIC HEARING

A. *Conduct a public hearing to receive comments regarding the 2025 Tax Year Proposed Property Tax Rate.* John Samford, C.P.A., Director of Finance, explained that in accordance with the Texas Property Tax Code, when a taxing unit's governing body proposes a tax rate that exceeds the calculated no-new-revenue tax rate, it is required to schedule a public hearing. For the 2025 tax year, the Town has calculated its no-new-revenue tax rate for maintenance and operations and voter-approval tax rate to be \$0.192557 and \$0.199296 per \$100 of taxable assessed value, respectively. At its meeting on August 5, 2025, the Town Council set a proposed tax rate of

\$0.199296 per \$100 of taxable assessed value, equal to the voter-approval tax rate. The no-new-revenue tax rate represents the rate that, when applied to the current year's taxable value (excluding new construction), would yield the same amount of property tax revenue as the previous year. The voter-approval tax rate is the maximum rate the Town may adopt without requiring an election for voter approval. Mr. Samford presented the Town's 2025 Tax Rate Calculation Worksheet, highlighting two effective tax rate increases. The proposed rate of \$0.199296 represents a 3.81% increase over the total no-new-revenue rate of \$0.191974, and a 3.50% increase over the no-new-revenue rate for maintenance and operations (\$0.192557). The difference between these rates reflects adjustments for exemptions affecting taxable value. Although the proposed rate is lower than the 2024 adopted rate of \$0.208550, the Texas Property Tax Code defines any rate above the no-new-revenue rate as an effective tax increase. Mayor Beecherl opened the public hearing and invited comments. Beth Jaynes, 3615 Beverly Drive, questioned increased operational costs, particularly the hiring of a records manager and a civilian parking officer, as well as the purchase of a vehicle. She suggested using volunteers for parking enforcement. Ms. Jaynes also noted that salaries appear to be above market rates and asked for a careful evaluation of how taxpayer funds are allocated. Connie Karcher, 4420 Edmondson Avenue, thanked the Town Council for extending pool hours and requested further extension to at least 5:00 p.m., citing high demand and heat. She also expressed interest in keeping the pool open through November and noted the lack of shower facilities. Ms. Karcher referenced a recent resident survey and suggested involving one or two residents in the survey process. She recommended conducting a short survey at the pool to gather resident feedback on extended hours. With no further comments, Mayor Beecherl closed the public hearing and thanked the residents for their comments.

B. Conduct a public hearing to receive comments on proposed amendments to the Town's Master Fee Schedule reauthorizing and adjusting rates and fees, including, but not limited to, water, sewer, solid waste services, and storm water drainage, effective October 1, 2025. John Samford, C.P.A., Director of Finance, stated that the Town manages its various fees for services through the maintenance of its Master Fee Schedule. The Fiscal Year 2025-26 Proposed Budget ("FY26 Budget") includes fee changes to adjust for increases in service contracts, as well as to address increasing operating and capital costs. Storm water drainage fees are proposed to be increased by 100.0% to provide funding needed for capital improvements of the Town's storm water utility system identified in the Town's pay-as-you-go 10-year capital improvement program ("CIP"). Water and sewer rates are proposed to be increased by 3.9% and 3.0%, respectively. The change in water rates is driven in part by increases in the Town's rate charged for the purchase of water from the Dallas County Park Cities Municipal Utility District, while sewer rates are being adjusted in part due to an increase in the cost of wastewater treatment charged by the City of Dallas. Rates are also increasing due to increasing operational costs and funding the Town's CIP. Town staff propose to adjust solid waste collection and recycling charges by 3.5% based on an estimate of the service cost increase associated with the Town's contracted third-party service providers. Lastly, swimming pool fees are being revised and increased to reflect rising operational costs and enhanced pool services. Regular Open Season Pool Pass for the May through September swim season is proposed to increase from \$60 to \$65. A new fee of \$125 for the "All-in-One" Pool Pass, which allows for the extended swim season from April to November, is included. The Resident and Guest Day Pass is proposed to increase from \$7.00 to \$10.00. Mayor Beecherl opened the public hearing and asked if anyone would like to make a comment. No comments were made. Hearing none, Mayor Beecherl closed the public hearing.

VI. MAIN AGENDA

A. Review, discuss, and take action on an ordinance to adopt the Fiscal Year 2025-26 Proposed Budget, with amendments, in the amount of \$94,580,884, including interfund transfers of \$11,914,218. John Samford, C.P.A., Director of Finance, stated that the Fiscal Year 2025-26 Proposed Budget (“FY26 Budget”) provides, funding for existing Town-provided services and operations, a competitive pay and benefit environment for employees, adequate funding of operating and capital needs, and funding the annual capital transfer from the General Fund to the Capital Projects Fund for future capital needs. Mr. Samford summarized the proposed budget for all funds subject to appropriation. As originally proposed, this is an \$82.3M expenditure budget supported by \$72.9M in estimated revenue, with the balance of \$9.4M, funded by use of available fund balance. As amended, this is an \$82.7M proposed expenditure budget supported by \$73.2M in estimated revenue, with the balance of \$9.5M, funded by the use of available fund balance. In this budget, all funds with a required minimum fund balance are in compliance with policy. Amendments to the original Proposed Budget, as previously discussed in a Study Session meeting held on August 19, 2025, include revenues increased by three-tenths of a percent, expenditures increased by four-tenths of a percent, and overall ending fund balance decreased by five-tenths of a percent. Mayor Beecherl asked if there were any questions, to which there were none. On a motion made by Council Member Leland White, seconded by Council Member Lydia Novakov, Council Members Alan Friendman and Marc Myers, and Mayor Pro Tem Don Snell unanimously voted to approve an ordinance adopting the Fiscal Year 2025-26 Proposed Budget, with amendments, in the amount of \$94,580,884, including interfund transfers of \$11,914,218.

B. Review, discuss, and take action on an ordinance setting the Town's 2025 ad valorem tax rate at \$0.199296 per \$100 of taxable assessed valuation of all taxable property for the 2025 Tax Year, as determined by the Dallas Central Appraisal District. John Samford, C.P.A., Director of Finance, explained that the proposed tax rate set by the Town Council for Fiscal Year 2025-26 is \$0.199296 per \$100 of taxable assessed value and is equal to the voter-approved tax rate. Mr. Samford reviewed the impact of the proposed tax rate on the average residential property. The average home value in the Town of Highland Park is \$3.2 million in 2025, which is approximately \$288k or a 10% increase over the 2024 average value. The tax levy will effectively increase taxes on an average home by a little over \$300, which is a little over 5%. On a motion made by Mayor Pro Tem Don Snell, seconded by Council Member Lydia Novakov, Council Members Alan Friendman, Marc Myers, and Leland White unanimously voted to approve the property tax rate be increased by the adoption of a tax rate of \$0.199296, which is effectively a 3.81 percent increase in the tax rate.

C. Review, discuss, and take action ratifying a property tax increase of \$983,902, which represents an increase of 5.02 percent over last year's adjusted levy and includes \$298,073 in revenues generated from new property added to the tax roll. John Samford, C.P.A., Director of Finance, said that Section 102.007 of the Texas Local Government Code requires a separate vote of the governing body to ratify the property tax increase reflected in the budget if the adoption of the budget generates more revenue from property taxes than in the previous year. This vote is in addition to and separate from the vote to adopt the budget or a vote to set the tax rate as required by Chapter 26 of the Texas Tax Code. The calculation of the increased revenues for the purpose of this item is based on the adjusted tax rolls for 2024, as opposed to the certified tax rolls for

2024, resulting in an increase in tax revenue of \$983,902. The additional tax revenue represents a 5.02% increase over last year's adjusted levy and includes \$298,073 in revenues generated from new property to the tax roll. On a motion made by Council Member Lydia Novakov, seconded by Council Member Marc Myers, the Town Council unanimously voted to ratify a property tax increase of \$983,902, which represents an increase of 5.02 percent over last year's adjusted levy and includes \$298,073 in revenues generated from new property added to the tax roll.

D. Review, discuss, and take action on a resolution amending the Town's Master Fee Schedule reauthorizing and adjusting rates and fees including, but not limited to, water, sewer, solid waste services and storm water drainage, effective October 1, 2025. John Samford, C.P.A., Director of Finance, explained that the Town of Highland Park manages its service-related fees through the Master Fee Schedule. Some fees are designed to fully recover the cost of the related services, such as solid waste collection and building services, while others, including swimming pool and library fees, are intended to partially offset service costs. Utility fees, such as those for water, sewer, and storm water drainage, are structured to support both current operations and future capital needs. As part of the Fiscal Year 2025–26 Proposed Budget, several fee adjustments are proposed to address increases in service contract costs, operating expenses, and capital improvement funding requirements. Stormwater drainage fees are proposed to increase by 100 percent to support capital improvements identified in the Town's 10-year pay-as-you-go Capital Improvement Program ("CIP"). Water and sewer rates are proposed to increase by 3.9 percent and 3.0 percent, respectively, reflecting higher costs from the Dallas County Park Cities Municipal Utility District and the City of Dallas, as well as rising operational expenses and funding needs for the Town's CIP. Solid waste and recycling charges are proposed to increase by 3.5 percent, based on projected increases from contracted third-party service providers. Swimming pool fees are also being revised to reflect higher operational costs and enhanced services. The Regular Open Season Pool Pass, covering May through September, is proposed to increase from \$60 to \$65. A new "All-in-One" Pool Pass, allowing access from April through November, is proposed at a rate of \$125. Additionally, the Resident and Guest Day Pass is proposed to increase from \$7.00 to \$10.00. On a motion made by Council Member Alan Friedman, seconded by Council Member Marc Myers, the Town Council unanimously voted to approve a resolution amending the Town's Master Fee Schedule reauthorizing and adjusting rates and fees, including, but not limited to, water, sewer, solid waste services, and storm water drainage, effective October 1, 2025.

E. Review, discuss, and take action on a resolution setting out the Town's compensation program and related pay plan effective October 1, 2025. John Samford, C.P.A., Director of Finance, addressed the Town Council regarding the Town of Highland Park's compensation program. The Town of Highland Park continues to maintain a competitive compensation program aimed at retaining and recruiting quality employees. Consistent with the prior fiscal year, the pay plan structure for FY 2025-26, encompassing pay ranges for sworn personnel, non-exempt hourly employees, and exempt employees, reflects a 3% increase. Regarding employee compensation, the resolution provides for specific merit-based pay adjustments. First responders will be eligible for a merit adjustment of up to 6 percent. Non-exempt civilian employees and all exempt employees will be eligible for a merit adjustment of up to 3.5 percent. Part-time and seasonal employees will also be eligible for certain pay adjustments as detailed in the resolution. All pay adjustments are limited to the maximum of each employee's respective pay range for their position. Furthermore, the resolution authorizes the Town Administrator to make adjustments to the compensation

program in the event of unusual or unexpected circumstances not otherwise contemplated. The compensation program and associated pay plan are included in the Proposed Budget for FY 2025-26, and the Town Council reviewed and discussed the matter during the budget process. In addition, Mr. Samford informed the Town Council that the Town has engaged a compensation consultant to conduct a comprehensive compensation and benefits study. The study is expected to be completed during FY 2026, and any resulting recommendations will be brought before the Town Council for consideration at a future date. On a motion made by Council Member Marc Myers, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Don Snell, the Town Council unanimously voted to approve a resolution setting out the Town's compensation program and related pay plan effective October 1, 2025.

VII. Mayor Beecherl adjourned the Town Council meeting at 8:28 a.m.

APPROVED on the 16th day of September 2025.

APPROVED.

Will C. Beecherl
Mayor

ATTEST:



Joanna Mekeal
Town Secretary