

CITY OF HIGHLAND HEIGHTS
Regular Council Meeting Minutes
September 2, 2025
Approved: September 16, 2025

On Tuesday, September 2, 2025 at 7:02 p.m. Mayor Meyers called the regular Council meeting to order at 176 Johns Hill Road.

Councilmembers Present: Mayor Greg Meyers. Councilmembers Deborah Ball, John Braun, Gary Chinn, Jesse Hockenbury, Patricia Hayley, Rene Heinrich. A quorum was present.

Staff Present: City Administrator, Michael Giffen; Police Chief, Bill Birkenhauer; City Clerk/Treasurer, Jeanne Pettit; Code Enforcement Officer, Dave Fornash; Attorney, Michelle Eviston.

Staff Absent: Public Works Director, Steve Lehman.

Mayor Meyers held a moment of silence for Mary Jo Braun, Councilmember John Braun's mother.

Announcement

Mayor Meyers announced there was a public hearing prior to the regular council meeting to give citizens an opportunity to provide input on the property tax rate.

Minutes for Approval

- **Regular Meeting Minutes of August 5, 2025:** These minutes were previously emailed to the Mayor, Council Members, and City Staff for review.
- **Action Taken:** Member Heinrich made a motion to accept the minutes from the regular council meeting held August 5, 2025. Seconded by Member Chinn. Discussion: None. Yes: 5, No: 0, Abstain: 1. Mayor Meyers declared the motion passed.

Scheduled Guests: None

Correspondence: None

Staff Reports

- City Administrator – Michael Giffen
- Reviewed his tax report. Recommended to keep ad valorem rate at 1.47. Highland Heights has the 7th lowest property tax rate in the Northern Kentucky region and the 4th lowest in Campbell County. Property taxes account for approximately 12% of the city's total revenue, and he would like to see that revenue percentage increase. The amount the city can generate on a 4% increase is relatively low; therefore, the 4% increase will have a relatively low impact on each resident; ex. On a \$100,000 home, the homeowner will pay an additional \$10 in property tax.
- Councilmember Heinrich – Historically, the city's tax rates have decreased over the years. She stated that the city needs to balance the equities brought into the city so if there is another emergency, like COVID when payroll taxes aren't coming in, the city isn't relying on one source of income to survive. She supports keeping the rate at 1.47.
- Councilmember Braun supports keeping the tax rate at 1.47 per \$1,000.
 - **Action Taken:** Member Heinrich made a motion to read the ordinance that includes the 1.47 tax rate. Seconded by Member Braun. Discussion: None. Yes 6, No: 0, Abstain: 0. Mayor Meyers declared the motion passed.

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- Alexandria Way Medians
 - Reasons for Installation: The comprehensive plan includes investments in central business district by improving aesthetics and street grids. The medians will help beautify the city once the street project is complete and greenery is planted in the medians. The medians provide a buffer between the business district and residential homes. Another goal is to help slow traffic.
 - Concerns: They are difficult to see at night and they take away the turn lane which limits ingress and egress from some businesses and one of the homes. There is concern that school buses will have a difficult time turning onto Robinson Road from Alexandria Way due to the location of the medians. Councilmembers have received comments that people believe the medians are unnecessary and not attractive.
 - Possible Solutions: Add reflective paint to the sides of the medians to make them more visible, especially at night. Add soft, low level, landscape lighting to the medians to increase visibility. Remove the medians – Mr. Giffen discussed the additional cost to remove the medians and recommended completing the project and giving people a chance to get used to the medians.
- **Ordinance – Second Reading**
 - **Ordinance 08-2025:** An ordinance amending Chapter 110 of the City of Highland Heights Code of Ordinances to change the Occupational License Fee assessed on the wages and compensation of employees working in the City from 1.0 to 1.5 percent, effective January 1, 2026.
 - **Action Taken:** Member Chinn made a motion to adopt Ordinance 08-2025 changing the occupational license fee from 1.0 to 1.5 percent effective January 1, 2026. Seconded by Member Ball. Discussion: None.
 - **Roll Call:** Councilmember Braun, yes; Hayley, yes; Ball, yes; Chinn, yes; Heinrich, yes; Hockenbury, yes. Mayor Meyers declared the motion passed.
- Police Chief – Bill Birkenhauer
 - Extra officers have been on patrol for school bus safety. Additional officers are also patrolling to manage potential student parties; there have been a few, but not many issues.
 - A speed sign has been installed on Robinson Road. There have been 500 inbound cars during the past 6 days, and a majority are going the speed limit. Times when speeding is more prevalent, officers have been assigned to monitor the street.
- City Clerk/Treasurer – Jeanne Pettit
 - Update on property tax collection timeline; homestead and disability exemptions; and the Campbell County Cleanup.
- Code Enforcement Officer – Dave Fornash
 - The Smoke Shop flag is down.
 - Recent property abatements were discussed.
- Public Works Supervisor – Steve Lehman
 - Report was distributed to council.

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- Attorney – Michelle Eviston
- **Ordinances – First Reading**
 - **Ordinance 09-2025:** An ordinance assessing and levying an ad valorem tax on the property within the City of Highland Heights, Kentucky and imposing interest and penalties thereon.
 - **Ordinance 10-2025:** An ordinance amending the city's alcoholic beverage license fees.

Unfinished Business: None

New Business: None

Citizens to Address Council

Larry Stange, 20 Elblaine – Discussed his concerns about the Alexandria Way medians. In addition to the concerns discussed earlier, he stated that delivery drivers, for better or worse, used the turn lane to make deliveries. Mr. Stange wanted to ensure that landscaping does not block drivers' line of site and lighting does not impose on residents along Alexandria Way. He suggested that, while the road project was still under construction, reflective paint or cones be installed on the islands. He also complimented the replacement of the sidewalk ramps and the grinding down of trip hazards on the sidewalks. He appreciates the city's beautification efforts.

Adjournment

- **Action Taken:** Member Ball made a motion to adjourn the September 2, 2025 council meeting. Seconded by Member Chinn. Discussion: None. Yes: 6, No: 0, Abstain: 0. Mayor Meyers declared the motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 8:04 p.m. on Tuesday, September 2, 2025.

Submitted by:

Jeanne M. Pettit

Jeanne M. Pettit, City Clerk/Treasurer

Signed:

G *v M*

Gregory V. Meyers, Mayor