

TOWN OF HIGHLAND BEACH • JUL/AUG 2024

# MANAGER'S MONTHLY



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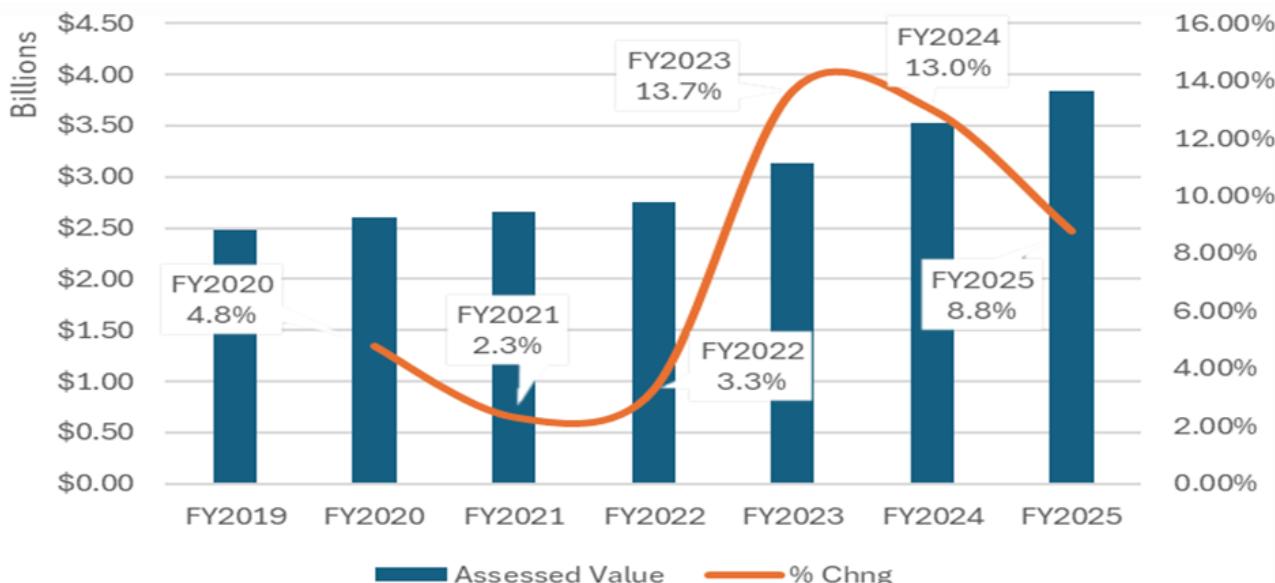
# MESSAGE FROM YOUR MANAGER

As summer kicks into high gear, so does budget season at the Town of Highland Beach. I am proud to report that our financial position has never been stronger. On June 16<sup>th</sup>, the Town Manager and Finance Director presented a preliminary budget that was balanced, highlighted by an 8.8% growth in property values, fiscal prudence, and the first full year of our Fire Rescue Department. This budget reflects our steadfast commitment to strategic and financial planning that aims to safeguard the future of our *Three Miles of Paradise*.

The \$28 million total preliminary budget, accounting for the General Fund, Water and Sewer Fund, Building Department Fund, and the Discretionary Sales Tax Fund, is \$5 million lower than the current year. This reduction is attributable to no longer operating two Fire Rescue Departments and the completion of the new fire station construction.

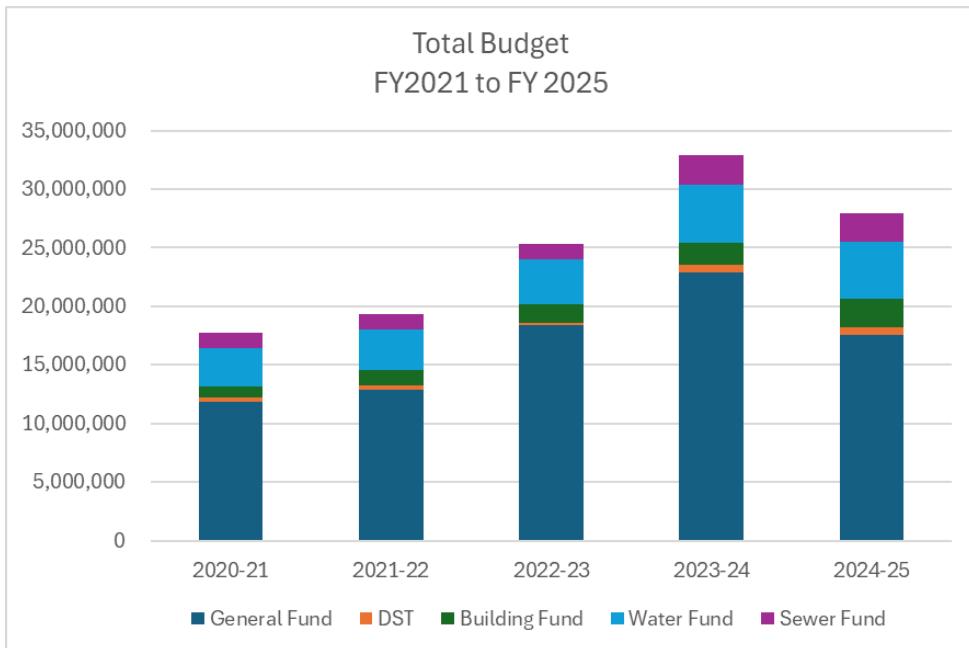
The preliminary budget is consistent with the Town Commission-approved Five-Year Financial Forecast, maintaining the millage rate at 3.5875 mills and adding over \$625,000 to reserves. The millage rate remains the third lowest in the county for the fourth consecutive year. The FY 2024-2025 budget will be the first year that the Water and Sewer Funds operate without money appropriated from the General Fund as the fund now pays all debt service costs.

This budget reflects the first full year of operations for the Fire Rescue Department, resulting in a saving of over \$1.2 million compared to the costs incurred with the City of Delray Beach. It also allocates necessary funds to address critical capital projects. These projects include raising Lift Station No. 2, completing Bel Lido bridge repairs, rehabilitating the old fire station, designing the Police Marine Unit docking facility, replacing water treatment membrane seals and ports,



implementing new SCADA software for the water treatment plant, replacing public safety vehicles, upgrading public safety security and communication equipment, replacing the water plant's degasification system, repaving Town Hall, and various other town facility upgrades.

The preliminary budget continues its commitment to employees and pursuing alternative funding sources (grants and appropriations) to assist with large capital projects. Notably, with the assistance of Representative Peggy Gossett-Seidman, we secured a second legislative appropriation of \$275,000 for our Lift Station No. 2 project. I would like to give special thanks to Rep. Gossett-Seidman for her continued service to our town.



The preliminary budget also received a favorable review from the Financial Advisory Board on June 27<sup>th</sup>, and is now headed back to the Town Commission on July 23<sup>rd</sup>. On July 23<sup>rd</sup>, the Town Commission will set the maximum millage rate and review any changes to the preliminary budget. The Town Commission will then review the budget at two statutory public hearings on September 3<sup>rd</sup> and September 18<sup>th</sup> (subject to change), both at 5:01 PM.

I encourage all residents to visit our website to view our budget presentation and documents and to watch the Town Commission meetings on the budget.

In closing, the Town's financial position remains very strong. The Preliminary FY 2024-2025 Budget reaffirms the Town Commission's dedication to preserving the Town's financial health, enhancing the quality of life for all residents, and investing in public safety and capital improvements. We remain committed to strategic planning and responsible fiscal management to ensure a prosperous future for Highland Beach.

#### **FY 2022-2023 Financial Audit Results:**

The Town of Highland Beach is pleased to announce the successful completion of the FY 2022-2023 financial audit. The audit resulted in a clean report with no findings or managerial issues, demonstrating our commitment to transparency and fiscal responsibility.

All Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) accounting regulations have been satisfied, ensuring that our financial statements accurately reflect the Town's financial position. The audit confirms a strong balance sheet, further underscoring the Town's robust financial health.

Additionally, all required financial data has been submitted to the State of Florida Auditor General by the June 30<sup>th</sup> deadline, ensuring full compliance with state reporting requirements.

This clean audit report is a testament to the diligent work of our financial team and the Town Commission's commitment to maintaining the highest standards of financial management.

## WHAT'S HAPPENING IN HIGHLAND BEACH?

### **Upcoming Agenda Items (Subject to Change and Additional Items may be Added)**

- Public Hearing Establishing the Maximum Millage Rate and the Approved Tentative Budget (July 23<sup>rd</sup>)
- Discussion of integrating the use of a Special Magistrate into the Code Enforcement Process
- Discussion of 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Event Planning
- Appointment of Florida League of Cities Voting Delegate
- Public Hearing Adopting the Final Millage Rate and Approving Budget (September 3<sup>rd</sup> at 5:01 PM)
- Public Hearing Adopting the Final Budget and FY 2024-2025 Fee Schedule (September 18<sup>th</sup> at 5:01PM)
- Strategic Priorities – FY2024 Updates
- Discussion of old fire station project
- Continued discussion of marine facilities ordinance amendments
- Continued discussion of Milani Park

### **Board Vacancies**

Board of Adjustment & Appeals - One (1) vacancy for a three-year term.

Natural Resources Preservation Advisory Board - One (1) vacancy for a three-year term.

For additional information, please contact the Town Clerk's Office at (561) 278-4548 or email [lgaskins@highlandbeach.us](mailto:lgaskins@highlandbeach.us) (Lanelda Gaskins) or [jdehart@highlandbeach.us](mailto:jdehart@highlandbeach.us) (Jaclyn DeHart), Monday through Friday from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM.

## COMMUNITY

### **Board Member Spotlight – Alan Blumberg (Natural Resources Preservation Advisory Board)**

Dr. Alan Blumberg is an urban oceanographer who studies the interaction between cities and their offshore coastal waters. He is a co-founder of Jupiter, a Silicon Valley startup company that is



deeply committed to the practical application of the world's best hydro science, coastal processes, weather prediction, and climate modeling. Together with George Mellor, he developed the Princeton Ocean Model, which is used by scientists and institutions throughout the world. For 15 years, he was George Meade Bond Professor of Ocean Engineering and Director of the Davidson Laboratory at Stevens Institute of Technology where he led several major studies to predict and assess storm flooding events. He is the recipient of the 2001 Karl Emil Hilgard Hydraulic Prize from the American Society of Civil Engineers and the 2007 Denny Medal from the Institute of Marine Engineering. A fellow of both the American Meteorological Society and the American Society of Civil Engineers, Dr. Blumberg is the author of more than

150 journal articles on oceanography and meteorology, as well as the textbook *The Urban Ocean*.

Because of his extensive research expertise, he is highly sought after by the media during unusual weather conditions. He has been featured in The New York Times, USA Today, The Weather Channel, and many other places! He received a Doctorate in Ocean Physics from The Johns Hopkins University and did post-doctoral work with Princeton University in their Geophysical Fluid Dynamics Program.

Alan has been a full-time resident for two years and loves the town! He tries to visit the beach every day and loves our tropical climate, even when that means lots of rain. In addition to the NRPAB, he is on the Board of The Coastal Stewards and gives presentations on oceanfront living. You can find his presentation on the Natural Resources Preservation Advisory Board's [webpage](#)!

## POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Highland Beach Police Department is pleased to provide the Away From Home initiative to our residents. Away From Home is an invaluable service that offers residents who are seasonal, vacationing, or away from their home for extended periods, the reassurance that if an issue arises such as utility emergencies, suspicious activity, a crime, or any other emergency situation, the resident and/or designated emergency contact person can be identified and contacted expeditiously. For residents who choose to participate, Away From Home is a free courtesy service that will provide contact information which will enhance our police department's ability to quickly respond to and remedy any emergency situations. To register for this program, please visit the [Away From Home Initiative webpage](#).



# FIRE RESCUE DEPARTMENT

Highland Beach Fire Rescue would like to remind residents how important it is to have a comprehensive hurricane preparedness plan for your family established before the threat of a hurricane is imminent. Having this plan set beforehand can help make evacuations more organized and efficient, reducing the stress of having to temporarily relocate. Here are some important aspects to include in your plan:

- Keep an adequate inventory of hurricane supplies and store them in a readily accessible place for evacuation.
- Designate an out-of-area contact person and provide your contact with details of your evacuation plan.
- Stock and store medications, including extra prescriptions, oxygen, and other medical supplies as needed.
- Establish an evacuation route and make sure vehicles are consistently maintained.

If you have not done so already, please visit the Town's website to [download a copy](#) of the 2024 Hurricane Preparation Manual and [register for CodeRED](#) to receive emergency notifications from the Town.



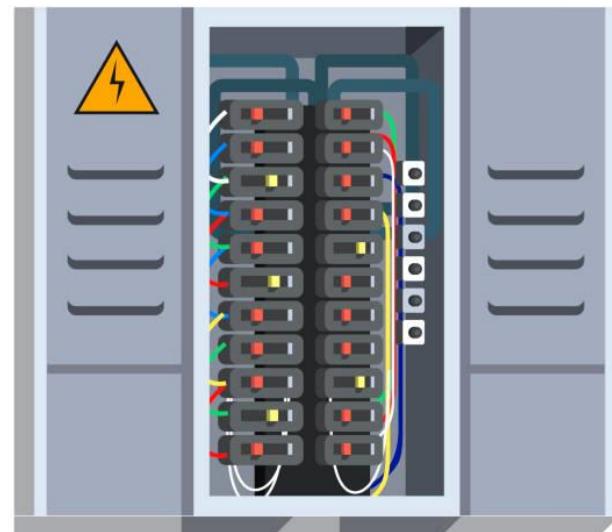
# BUILDING DEPARTMENT

## The Impact of Installing Electric Tankless Water Heaters in Highland Beach Condominiums

In Highland Beach, the installation of electric tankless water heaters in condominiums can pose significant challenges and risks for the entire building. Whether the condos are mid- or high-rise, they typically share an electrical service that feeds multiple units. These buildings are constructed to meet the electrical demands of their time, not anticipating future increases. Therefore, the introduction of high-demand appliances like electric tankless water heaters can lead to a series of issues that affect both individual unit owners and the entire homeowner association (HOA).

### Electrical Capacity and Demand

Buildings in Highland Beach are designed to accommodate the electrical load anticipated at the time of their construction. When unit owners start replacing storage tank water heaters with electric tankless water heaters, the electrical demand significantly increases. These tankless heaters require substantial power to provide sufficient gallons per minute (GPM) flow necessary for a consistent hot water supply. Without a high GPM rating, users may experience lukewarm water, especially if multiple appliances or fixtures are using hot water simultaneously.



### Electrical Panel and Wiring Upgrades

Most electrical panels in Highland Beach condominium units are not designed to handle the additional load of an electric tankless water heater. This necessitates an upgrade not only of the panel but also of the wiring that feeds the panel from the common area electrical room, which is typically under the HOA's jurisdiction. This process requires two separate permits: one for the individual condominium unit and another for the HOA, as work will be conducted in common areas.

### Load Calculations and Permits

The installation of a tankless water heater demands detailed electrical load calculations for both the unit's electrical panel and the building's main electrical service. The Highland Beach Building

Department will require these calculations to ensure that the common area electrical room and the overall building electrical service can handle the increased load. This creates a domino effect, as adding one high-demand appliance impacts the entire electrical system of the building.



### Potential for System Overload

As more unit owners install electric tankless water heaters, the cumulative electrical demand can easily exceed the building's capacity. This can lead to situations where the electrical service feeding several floors becomes overloaded, potentially tripping and causing

power outages for multiple units. The first-come, first-served nature of such upgrades can result in inequities, where some owners can install these heaters while others cannot, potentially affecting property values and creating dissatisfaction among residents.

### HOA Challenges

HOAs in Highland Beach face significant challenges when unit owners request to install electric tankless water heaters. Allowing such installations can force the HOA to consider expensive upgrades to the entire building's electrical system, a cost that would ultimately be borne by all unit owners. To prevent these issues, many HOAs have established rules prohibiting the installation of electric tankless water heaters. However, more HOAs need to adopt such regulations to safeguard the interests of all residents.

### Conclusion

Switching from storage tank water heaters to electric tankless water heaters in Highland Beach condominiums can be detrimental and costly for the entire building and its residents. The increased electrical demand, the need for extensive electrical upgrades, and the potential for system overload outweigh the individual benefits of on-demand hot water. This one-sided opinion underscores the importance of comprehensive HOA rules to prevent the installation of electric tankless water heaters, protecting the community from significant financial and operational burdens.

# PLANNING AND ZONING



IT'S SEA TURTLE NESTING SEASON (March 1 – October 31). Bright lights from buildings can cause sea turtles to become disoriented, leading the hatchlings to stray away from the shoreline where they need to swim and start their life. If they are unable to reach the ocean quickly, they can become dehydrated and exhausted, making them an easy meal for predators.

In order to minimize "interior light" emanating from doors and windows within line-of-sight of the beach, one or more of the following remedial measures are required:

- \*Rearrange lamps, televisions, and other movable fixtures away from windows.
- \*Use opaque shades or room darkening window treatments (e.g. blinds, curtains, screens).
- \*Apply window tint or film that meets the light transmittance standards for tinted glass.
- \*Other remedial measures approved by the Building Official.

As a friendly reminder, follow these tips and share them with your community:

- Keep beaches dark. From dusk to dawn, turn off any lights not necessary for human safety. Use long wavelength amber LED lamps for lights that must stay lit and shield lights, so they are not visible from the beach. Remember to close shades or curtains at night.
- No flash photos. On the beach at night, don't take flash photos or use bright cellphones or flashlights. This can cause turtles to become disoriented and crawl away from the ocean, putting them at risk.
- Remember, sea turtles are protected by law. Keep your distance and give sea turtles space if you see one on the beach. Never touch a nesting turtle because it might leave the beach without nesting if disturbed.
- Clear the way at the end of the day. Beach furniture, boats, toys and trash left behind on the sand can become obstacles that block crawling sea turtles. Fill in any holes dug in the sand. Holes can trap turtles and they also pose a safety risk to humans.

Please report sea turtles that are sick, injured, dead, entangled or are in danger to the FWC's Wildlife Alert Hotline: 888-404-3922 so trained responders can help. For information on the Town's new sea turtle lighting ordinance, please contact Ingrid Allen, Town Planner, at 561-637-2012 or [iallen@highlandbeach.us](mailto:iallen@highlandbeach.us)



### **Code Tip of the Month: Receiving a Violation**

Code compliance violations are one of the more serious laws in Florida that carry penalties that you will want to avoid. The notice that you have received tells you what you can expect from the violation process. You will need to be responsive to the violation by the deadline in the notice.

Ignoring a code violation is never a good course of action. This is something that requires proactive effort to prevent from turning into a large problem for you or your family. The first thing you need to do is touch base with the compliance officer. This lets the division know that you received the violation notice and that you are working on the situation. You can also let the officer know that you are working on a resolution for the issue.

A resolution will be mandatory per the code violation, so you will need a plan to take care of the issue before the end of the stated period laid out by the Notice of Violation. Make sure that you respond to the violation promptly and take actionable steps to resolve the issue. Otherwise, you may be assessed added fines that will only increase the cost of the process. If you choose not to attend your code hearing, or you miss the hearing for any reason, fines will be assessed against the property. If you are renting, the fines will be assessed against the landlord, in which case you will not be able to ignore them any longer.

Satisfying a code violation and appearing at your hearing are critical steps that must be taken if you want to be able to deal with this issue and clear it up. This is not like a parking ticket that you can ignore with limited consequences. A code violation is worth your attention!

For any questions or concerns relating to Highland Beach Code Compliance please contact Code Compliance Officer Adam Osowsky at 561-278-4540 or [aosowsky@highlandbeach.us](mailto:aosowsky@highlandbeach.us).

# LIBRARY

Join us on July 30<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 PM for a special event with the Highland Beach Sea Turtle Team! These dedicated volunteers monitor and document sea turtle nesting activity along our 2.8 miles of beachfront. Meet the team and enjoy a screening of the documentary "*Turtle - The Incredible Journey*." This is an award-winning film that has "enchanted and enthralled audiences worldwide." It's an adventure you won't want to miss of one Loggerhead Sea Turtle's odyssey and one that begins right on the beach in Boca Raton!

This event is free, and voluntary donations to the non-profit group are welcome.

Concerts – at 5:30 PM

- July 11<sup>th</sup>: Heart & Soul Duo (piano and vocal)
- Aug 15<sup>th</sup>: Abstract Citizen (jazz quartet)

Movie Nights – Showtime at 5:30 PM

- July 9<sup>th</sup>: The Outfit
- July 16<sup>th</sup>: Empire of Light
- July 30<sup>th</sup>: Turtle - The Incredible Journey
- August 6<sup>th</sup>: Operation Fortune: Ruse de Guerre

Other Activities:

- Art Exhibit: Paintings by "Mizou"
- Learn to download eBooks: call for appointment
- Current Events Discussion Group: Saturdays at 10:30 AM
- Small Fry Story Time plus Crafts on Wednesdays at 4:30 PM, ages 4 and up
- Toddler Time: Stories and Rhymes on Saturdays at 10:30 AM, ages 2 and 3

Call us at 561-278-5455 for more information!

## Library Hours:

Monday - Thursday	10:00 AM to 8:00 PM
Friday	10:00 AM - 4:30 PM
Saturday	9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

# THE NAVY HAS LANDED IN HIGHLAND BEACH FIRE STATION #120

BY JOHN SHOEMAKER

Well, we have worked and waited for several years and now Highland Beach has its own Fire/EMS Department with Chief Joseph at the helm.

In continuing support to recognize those who work or live in our town, the Town of Highland Beach has a tab on its website: [www.highlandbeach.us](http://www.highlandbeach.us), and for veterans under the "Community" tab: Veteran Heroes of Highland Beach | Highland Beach, FL. Please visit this tab to read stories and profiles of our citizens who have served or are serving our country and our town.

This is about welcoming Megan Cyr as a new member of our brand-new Fire Department.

Megan Cyr, 32, brings a wealth of experience and expertise to our Fire/EMS Department. Her impressive credentials not only significantly enhance the skill level, competence, and capability of our new organization, but also instill a sense of confidence in our community.



Originally from Somonauk, Illinois, Megan's journey to Highland Beach is a testament to her unwavering dedication to service. After high school, she attended the University of Wisconsin, Parkside, as a star soccer player. But she was at a crossroads and was not sure what path to follow, so she joined the U.S. Navy in 2012. Her commitment led her to boot camp at the Naval Station Great Lakes Training Center, the largest training installation of its kind.

Megan was in top physical condition and easily passed the 9-week course. She learned integral lessons with precise attention to detail and became an ambassador for the Navy. She then became an aviation electronics technician and was stationed at the Naval Air Station in Lemoore, CA. She later worked on F-18 Super Hornet fighter targeting systems.

After a couple of years, Cyr was transferred to the Jacksonville Naval Air Station to work on anti-submarine sonar detection systems.

After four years, Megan left the Navy and spent her time learning about the role of a pharmacist at the Cleveland Clinic in Weston, FL. Inspired, she then decided to spend four months in Fort Lauderdale at EMT school, followed by more intensive training to become a Paramedic.

During the COVID crisis, Megan went to New York City to work at the huge NY Presbyterian Hospital. There, she lent a sorely needed hand to the nursing crews, who were overwhelmed and exhausted from the Pandemic. Working 72 hours a week for months, she assisted nurses during a most difficult time, and due to the state of emergency, she acted as a registered nurse in her duties to save lives.

Coming back to Florida, she worked as a Paramedic at the Delray Hospital ER. Here she saw a variety of medical problems on a daily basis - from superficial wounds to serious trauma requiring vital attention.

Incredibly, the next step was for Megan to endure six more months of training to become a firefighter at the Fire Academy in Broward County, Davie, FL. While looking for the right opening to join a fire department, she went back to the Presbyterian Hospital to work. After a while, she heard about the new department in Highland Beach.

She described her interview experience as very “purposeful,” without the fluff and with a focus on substance. Clearly, the goal was to create a working team, a family, of first responders to ensure the safety, health, and security of our residents.

Megan’s plans moving forward are to ensure the effective establishment of our new Station and to personally continue her education to earn a nursing degree as an RN.

Highland Beach is very fortunate to have Megan on the team to serve our community for many years to come. We welcome her and all the Fire/EMS team to make our Three Miles of Paradise safe and secure, operating out of Fire Station 120, in Highland Beach.





# TOWN OF HIGHLAND BEACH

## PUBLIC SAFETY

3614 S. OCEAN BLVD. • HIGHLAND BEACH, FL 33487  
(561) 266-5800 (561) 237-5575



### Hurricane Season

The hurricane season runs from June 1st to November 30th each year and requires serious attention from all town residents. According to the National Weather Association, this year there is an 85% chance of an above-normal season, a 10% chance of a near-normal season, and a 5% chance of a below-normal season for this hurricane season.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) predicts a range of 17 to 25 total named storms with winds of 39 mph or higher. Within that range, 8 to 13 storms are expected to become hurricanes with winds of 74 mph or higher, and among those, 4 to 7 may develop into major hurricanes (Category 3, 4, or 5) with winds of 111 mph or higher. The forecasters have 70% confidence in these ranges.

Regardless of predictions, it takes only one devastating storm to make it a “bad” hurricane season.

The message is clear - ***HAVE A PLAN & BE PREPARED!***

Residents should know that Highland Beach is a **MANDATORY EVACUATION ZONE** when a Category 2 hurricane or higher is expected. In the event of an evacuation order, everyone should comply. Emergency responders cannot assist in high winds or dangerous weather conditions. If there is an emergency during a storm, expect significant delays in receiving help.

As with past storms, NO specific “pass or placard” is required to return to town after evacuating. Residents with identification showing their home address will be allowed back if safe to do so and conditions allow. Any workers or caretakers returning to town will need identification and the address and resident/condominium name they are going to.

In previous hurricane seasons, the Town’s ***CodeRED*** notification system has been the most effective way to share important and timely information with our residents. If you haven’t already, please register for ***CodeRED*** as soon as possible. You can do this through the Town’s website.

Please contact us if we can be of any assistance in your planning and preparation. We are always available to meet with residents, HOA members, or your association’s staff.

You can learn more about ***Hurricane Preparedness*** and resources through our website at [highlandbeach.us](http://highlandbeach.us).

The top priority of the ***Highland Beach Police and Fire Rescue*** is to ensure the safety, security, and health of our community before, during, and after any storm.

***HAVE A PLAN & BE PREPARED!***

## **TOWN COMMISSION**



Mayor Natasha Moore  
Email: [nmoore@highlandbeach.us](mailto:nmoore@highlandbeach.us)  
Phone: (561) 278-4548



Vice Mayor David Stern  
Email: [dstern@highlandbeach.us](mailto:dstern@highlandbeach.us)  
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Commissioner Evalyn David  
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