

**Agenda Item 10.B.**  
**March 01, 2022 Town Commission Meeting**

**Meeting Date:** 3/1/2022  
**Submitted by:** Natasha Moore, Vice Mayor – Commissioner  
**Subject:** Pace Advertising and Educational Campaign

**Summary:**

Edward Moore received a letter from John Ross Founder | Committee to Save Highland Beach Corp. In that letter there are several instances of misinformation. Attached is a description of a few examples of the misinformation.

**Recommendation:**

Discuss if action is needed to correct the misinformation.



Examples of incorrect information in Letter from John Ross Founder of the Committee to Save Highland Beach Corp.

1. Cover of Envelope (see attached):

**Misinformation:** Stop the Highland Beach Tax Increase

**Correction:** There is no tax increase proposed. Highland Beach has the second lowest tax rate compared to our neighbors (see chart that compares tax rates).

2. Third paragraph of the letter (see attached):

**Misinformation:** The commission did not tell you that 5% of the budget equals \$1,200,000.00

**Correction:** the spending limit in John Ross' letter is incorrect and is \$175,000.00 more than what is being recommended by the commission.

In the letter from the Vice Mayor (see letter), residents were told...

"... the recommendation is to change the funding limit to 5% of the town's annual budget. The current annual budget is approximately \$20.5 million, so the funding limit would be approximately \$1.025 million. Going forward, the funding limit would be calculated as 5% of the annual budget, keeping up with inflation and the scope of services provided by the town."

3. Third paragraph of the letter (see attached):

**Misinformation:** The Commission could fund as many \$1,200,000.00 items per year as the Commission wants. The loophole together with the proposed higher spending limit would allow the Commission to spend millions upon millions of dollars, without a vote of the people.

**Correction:** There is limited money in the budget and the budget needs to balance each year. Additional projects, with corresponding increased spending, would require bond issuance from the town or significant tax increases. Bond issuance requires a vote of the people. Also, there are limits on tax rate increases (see TRIM and Maximum Millage Rate Information).

4. Seventh paragraph of the letter (see attached):

**Misinformation:** Allows the Commissioners to immediately raise their own salaries to any amount they may care to pay themselves.

**Correction:** The language states that salaries cannot be increased by more than 5% in a given fiscal year. The current annual salaries are \$15,000 for the Mayor and \$12,000 for the remaining Commissioners and were established 20 years ago.



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Highland Beach, FL 33487

# STOP THE HIGHLAND BEACH TAX INCREASE

PRSRT STD  
US Postage  
PAID  
Ft Lauderdale FL  
Permit # 4688

## VOTE NO MARCH 8TH



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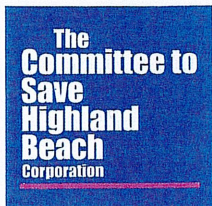
EDWARD MOORE

4400 TRANQUILITY DR

HIGHLAND BEACH FL 33487-4220







## A Letter from the Founder of The Committee to Save Highland Beach

Dear Voter:

The Committee to Save Highland Beach Corp. (CSHB) began as a single email to a few hundred town residents opposed to the crazy commission plan to tear up A1A at the cost of \$54,000,000. We currently send almost 2500 emails to Highland Beach residents per issue. We are completely non-partisan, but we are opinionated.

On March 8th, you will be voting on five Town Charter Amendments placed on the ballot by the Commissioners. Except for Question # 1, all the rest have gone seriously off the rails.

**Question #2 is the voter's worst nightmare:** It absurdly increases the amount of money the Commissioners can spend on an item without going to the people for a vote. The current commission limit is \$350,000.00 per project or item. The commission wants your vote to change their spending limit to 5% of the total town budget per item. The Commission did not tell you that 5% of the budget equals \$1,200,000.00 per item. You were also not told that the Commission could fund as many \$1,200,000.00 items per year as the Commission wants. This loophole together with the proposed higher spending limit would allow the Commission to spend millions upon millions of dollars, without a vote of the people.

If approved, the Power to decide on big-spending that our town's 4,000 voters have always held dear will go to the five Commissioners. Why would we ever give up our right to vote on significant new items or projects? The current spending limit is serving us well. At the Commission's proposed new spending limit, each Commissioner's whim project will raise your taxes by 10%. **ON QUESTION #2, VOTE A VERY BIG "NO"**

**Question #3:** Allows the Town Manager or Finance Director to pay invoices without a commissioner looking at the transaction. Currently, a commissioner must approve all payments. Past commissioners have found unauthorized payments and prevented fraud. It is the job responsibility of the Commission to authorize payments. The Commission has no more important job than to watch over our money. **ON QUESTION #3, VOTE "NO"**

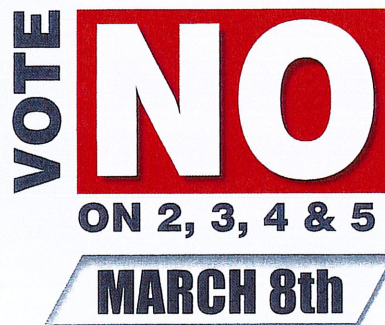
**Question #4:** Would raise the term limit of the Current Commissioners to 12 years. "Wait," you say, "This means that the sitting Commissioners want to extend the term limit for themselves?" Yup! "While they are in office?" Yup. "For their own benefit?" Yup. **ON QUESTION #4, VOTE "NO"**

**Question #5:** : Allows the Commissioners to immediately raise their own salaries to any amount they may care to pay themselves. After that, the Commissioners can increase their new salaries by up to 5% per year. CSHB finds it disheartening that the current Commissioners have the audacity to ask us to raise their salaries to any amount they want. Every dollar of salary increase commissioners give themselves is a dollar of new taxes. **ON QUESTION #5, VOTE "NO"**

Sincerely,

John Ross Founder | Committee to Save Highland Beach Corp.

**Please join our mailing list by emailing "join list" to [cshb@cshbfla.com](mailto:cshb@cshbfla.com)**  
Paid electioneering communication paid for by The Committee to Save Highland Beach Corporation  
3450 S. Ocean Blvd. # 806, Highland Beach FL 33487





- We are establishing our own Fire-Rescue department; and,
- Our population has increased and our infrastructure is aging.

When considering costs of forthcoming and potential projects, the commission discussed changing the limit so necessary projects can be authorized in a timely manner. For example:

- Purchase of a fire truck is well over \$1 million; and,
- Resurfacing of side streets costs over \$500,000; and,
- New reverse osmosis treatment unit costs over \$425,000; and,
- Lining of sewer pipes will be over \$1 million.

The Commission decided the funding limit should not be a fixed amount but rather an amount tied to our annual budget, so the limit changes as our annual budget changes. Therefore, the recommendation is to change the funding limit to 5% of the town's annual budget. The current annual budget is approximately \$20.5 million, so the funding limit would be approximately \$1.025 million. Going forward, the funding limit would be calculated as 5% of the annual budget, keeping up with inflation and the scope of services provided by the town.

Please note, the Commission could not find any other town in South Florida that has a commission spending limit so this provision is unusual. However, the input we have received so far indicates that our residents prefer having a spending limit.

#### Official Referendum Language

TO RECOGNIZE THE GROWTH OF COSTS AND SUPPORT THE DELIVERY OF TOWN SERVICES, INCLUDING ITEMS LIKE THE WATER TREATMENT PLANT, LIBRARY, POLICE, AND FIRE RESCUE, SHALL THE TOWN OF HIGHLAND BEACH AMEND ITS CHARTER AT SECTION 2.01(30) TO PROVIDE THAT THE FUNDING LIMITS BE INCREASED FROM THE CURRENT LIMIT OF \$350,000, WHICH WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1991, TO FIVE PERCENT (5%) OF THE TOWN'S TOTAL ANNUAL BUDGET?

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me, any Commissioner or the Town Manager at your convenience. For more information, visit: [www.highlandbeach.us/Vote2022](http://www.highlandbeach.us/Vote2022).

Sincerely,

*Natasha Moore*

**Natasha Moore**  
VICE-MAYOR

**VOTE BY MAIL**

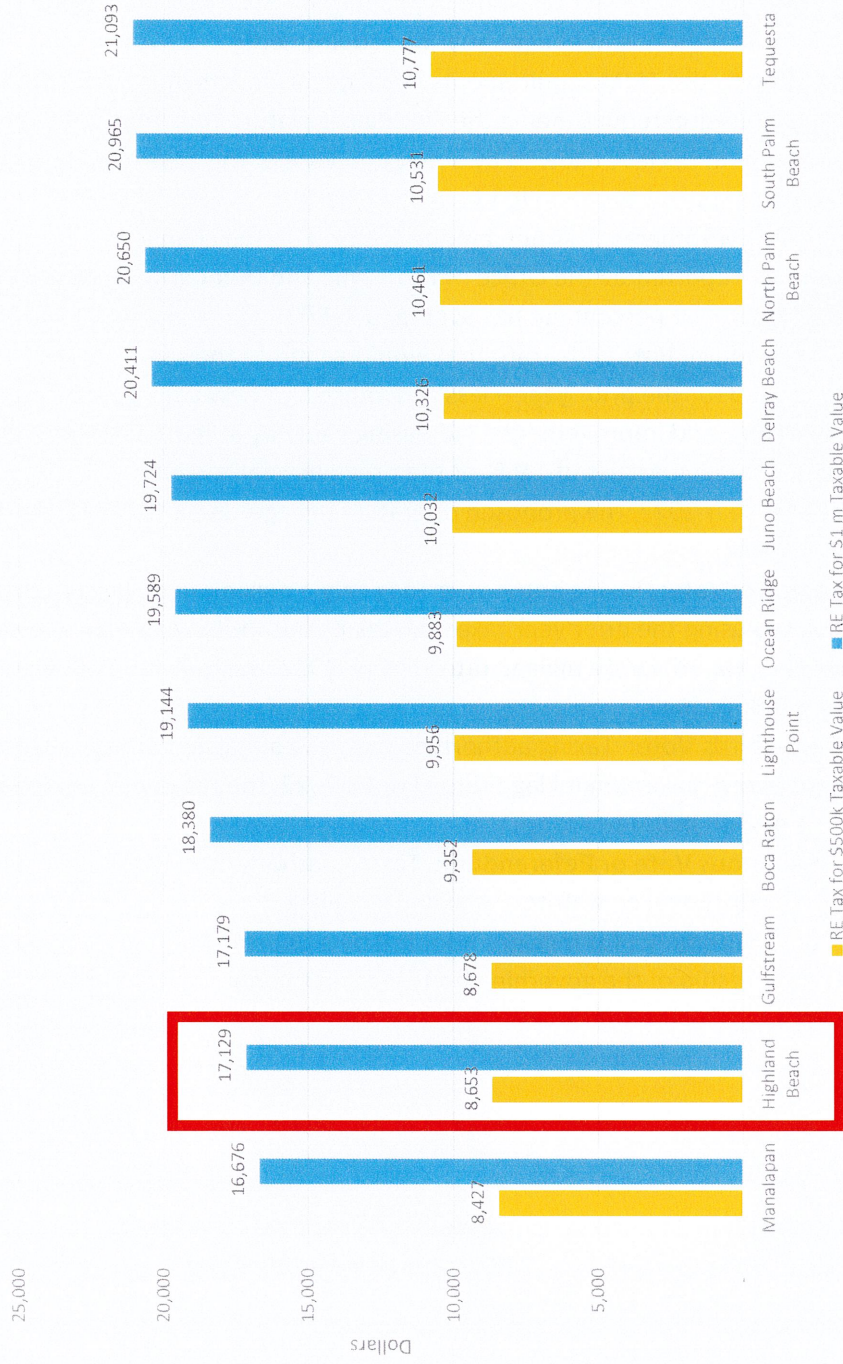
**Voter Registration Deadline - 2/7/22**  
**In-Person Voting Day - 3/8/22**





# Highland Beach Millage Tax Rates are Second Lowest

2021 Real Estate Taxes by Municipality  
for Taxable Values of \$500k and \$1 million





## TRIM and Maximum Millage Rate Information

- The Florida Legislature passed the Truth in Millage (TRIM) Act in 1980. The law is designed to inform taxpayers which governmental entity is responsible for the taxes levied and the amount of tax liability taxpayers owe to each taxing authority.
- The TRIM Act established the statutory requirements that all taxing authorities must follow – including all notices and budget hearing requirements
- In addition to the TRIM requirements, local governments must also conform to the maximum millage limitation requirements the Florida Legislature first imposed in 2007.
- The maximum tax levy allowed by a majority vote of the governing body is based on a percentage applied to the rolled-back rate (per F.S. Chapter 200.065).
- For local governments, this percentage is based on the change in per capita Florida personal income, as reported by the Office of Economic and Demographic Research each year. Over the past 10 years the percentage has averaged 2.17%.
- The **Rolled-back Rate** is the rate that would generate the same amount of property tax revenues as approved for the prior year – less allowances for new construction, additions, deletions, annexations, and improvements, increasing value by at least 100% and tangible personal property value in excess of 115% of the previous year's value.
- For Fiscal Year 2022, the proposed operating millage rate is 3.2294 mills, the rolled-back rate is 3.1215 mills.
- **By Majority Vote:** Taxing authorities may levy a maximum millage equal to a rolled-back rate calculated using the prior year taxes the taxing authority would have levied if it had adopted the maximum majority vote millage rate. For FY 2022, the maximum allowed millage by Majority Vote is 4.0669 mills.
- **By Two-Thirds Vote:** Taxing authorities may levy a millage not more than 110 percent of the majority vote maximum millage rate. For FY 2022, the maximum allowed millage by Two-Thirds Vote is 4.4736 mills.
- **By Unanimous Vote or Referendum:** Taxing authorities may levy any millage not more than their constitutional or statutory maximum millage.
- Voting requirements for millages adopted by a two-thirds or unanimous vote are based on the full membership of the governing body, not on the number of members present at the time of the vote.