

MINUTES
CITY OF INDIAN ROCKS BEACH
SPECIAL CITY COMMISSION MEETING
Holiday Inn -- Pelican Sandpiper Room
401 2nd Street, Indian Rocks Beach, Florida 33785
Wednesday, September 10, 2025, at 6:00 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor-Commissioner Houseberg called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Present:

- Commissioner Hilary King
- Commissioner John Bigelow
- Commissioner Jude Bond
- Vice Mayor-Commissioner Janet Wilson
- Mayor-Commissioner Denise Houseberg

Also present: Acting City Manager Dan Carpenter, City Clerk Lorin Kornijtschuk, and, City Attorney Matthew Maggard

For continuity, items are listed in agenda order, although not necessarily discussed in that order.

1. PUBLIC COMMENTS.

- **Brenna Watner, Student, St. Petersburg College** -- Presented findings from her bachelor's degree assignment analyzing the city's budget. Expressed gratitude to Acting City Manager Dan Carpenter for providing key information. Noted the proposed budget serves as the city's financial roadmap, highlighting that Indian Rocks Beach maintains one of the lowest millage rates in the surrounding area at 1.73%. Emphasized that the balanced budget reflects both operational needs and the community's financial responsibility.

2. FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026 BUDGET PUBLIC HEARINGS:

A. ORDINANCE NO. 2025-03 -- PUBLIC HEARING / FIRST READING

Adopting the final levying of ad valorem taxes for the City of Indian Rocks Beach, Pinellas County, Florida, Fiscal Year 2025/2026; providing for notification of requisite government authorities; and providing for an effective date.

City Attorney Maggard read Ordinance No. 2025-03 by title.

Mayor-Commissioner Houseberg opened the public hearing. No public comments were received. Public hearing closed.

City Attorney Maggard noted for the record that the millage rate of 1.7300 will produce a total estimated tax collection of \$3,574,070 based on a 97% collection rate. The annual rate of 1.7300 is 2.80% higher than the rollback rate of 1.6829.

Acting City Manager Comments: Acting City Manager Carpenter provided context on the millage ordinance:

- Hurricane impact occurred after January 1st assessment date, limiting immediate effect on current year values
- City only experienced 0.76% increase in assessed values (less than 1%) contrasted with double-digit market value increases
- Future assessments may be impacted by hurricane-related demolitions and reconstruction
- Current millage rate of 1.73 has been maintained for several years and was actually lowered three times since 2017
- City's 1.73 millage represents only approximately 11% of residents' total property tax bills, with the remainder from county, school board, and special districts

Motion: Vice Mayor-Commissioner Wilson motioned to accept Ordinance No. 2025-03 as read.

Second: Commissioner King seconded the motion.

Ayes: Bigelow, Bond, King, Wilson, Houseberg

Nay: None

MOTION CARRIED 5-0

B. ORDINANCE NO. 2025-04 -- PUBLIC HEARING / FIRST READING

Adopting a budget for Fiscal Year 2025/2026; making appropriations and operating expenditures for Fiscal Year 2025/2026; providing for notification of requisite government authorities; and providing for an effective date.

City Attorney Maggard read Ordinance No. 2025-04 by title.

Mayor-Commissioner Houseberg opened the public hearing. No public comments were received. Public hearing closed.

Acting City Manager Carpenter provided a comprehensive budget overview:

Budget Process and Timeline:

- Budget development began in spring with resident input, individual commissioner consultations, and staff collaboration
- July workshop was conducted with no changes requested
- Second reading scheduled in two weeks with required advertisement in Tampa Bay Times on September 21st

Key Budget Highlights:

- **Balanced Budget:** All funds balanced with the General Fund showing \$370,000 revenue in excess over expenditures
- **Reserve Restoration:** Excess funds will help restore reserves utilized during hurricane recovery (approximately \$2 million loss)
- **Fund Balance:** Maintaining a healthy 84% fund balance even after hurricane losses
- **Employee Compensation:** All employees in all funds proposed to receive 3% salary increase

General Fund Highlights:

- 7.53% increase in Pinellas County Sheriff's Office contract (largest expenditure)
- 5.8% increase in property and casualty insurance (previously budgeted at 5%)

Impact Fee Fund Transfers:

- \$55,000 transfer for tree removal and replacement at Tiki Gardens Park and 10th Avenue (hurricane damage)
- \$35,000 transfer from multi-modal impact fund for Cole Park paving in anticipation of paid parking discussions

Solid Waste Enterprise Fund:

- Self-sustaining fund operating on user fees
- 5% increase proposed for both commercial and residential container services
- 8% increase from Pinellas County traffic fees (largest operating expense)
- 3% increase in recycling fees
- Discussion noted regarding potential future review of recycling agreement due to cost increases

Capital Improvement Plan:

- Five-year plan with primary focus on next fiscal year appropriations
- Major projects include Brown Park swing shade, Cole Park irrigation and sodding (hurricane recovery), LED lighting completion at Cole Park
- Aquafence grant project to be added (75% state-funded)
- Deliberate slowdown in capital projects following intensive 2024 hurricane recovery year

Stormwater Management:

- City operates without stormwater fee (unique among area municipalities)
- Previous stormwater study estimated \$16 million for complete city-wide improvements
- Utilized \$2.1 million in federal ARPA funds for Harbor Drive projects
- Future stormwater discussions may require fee consideration

Mayor-Commissioner Houseberg expressed appreciation for the transparent and clear budget process, noting satisfaction that the millage rate did not require an increase despite hurricane impacts.

Motion: Vice Mayor-Commissioner Wilson motioned to accept Ordinance No. 2025-04 at first reading.

Second: Commissioner King seconded the motion.

Ayes: Bigelow, Bond, King, Wilson, Houseberg

Nay: None

MOTION CARRIED 5-0

3. OTHER LEGISLATIVE MATTERS: None

4. ADJOURNMENT.

Motion: Vice Mayor-Commissioner Wilson motioned to adjourn at 6:24 P.M.

Second: Commissioner King seconded the motion.

Unanimous approval by acclamation

Meeting adjourned at 6:24 P.M.