

Town Hall

February 17, 2021

The Chair, Ms. Port, called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm. Trustee Gabram and Trustee Mueller were present. Fiscal Officer Karen Walder and Trustee Assistant Melissa Palmer were present.

The following Department Head was present: Road Superintendent Gene Layne.

**MINUTES:** *Mr. Mueller made the motion to accept the minutes of the Regular Meeting held on January 20, 2021, as presented. Mr. Gabram seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

**ANNUAL REPORTS:** *Mr. Mueller made the motion to accept the 2020 annual departmental reports from the Fire, Police, Road, Facilities, & Zoning. Mr. Gabram seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

**ROAD DISPOSITION OF PROPERTY: MACK TRUCK #47:** Mr. Layne stated that the Mack Plow Truck has lost its transmission and has some other issues as well, such as rust along the frame. Mr. Layne stated he is looking at placing the truck on GovDeals as he thinks it's not worth putting money into the transmission.

*Mr. Gabram made the motion to approve the Road Superintendent's recommendation to dispose of township property attached to the memo "Road Dept Disposition List", dated February 9, 2021, as each item on the list is not needed for public use, is obsolete, or is unfit for public use. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

**ROAD DISPOSITION OF PROPERTY: RESERVE:** Mr. Layne would like to set a reserve price of \$2,500.00 to cover the tow bills and having the repair shop look into the transmission.

*Mr. Gabram made the motion, at the request of the Road Superintendent, to set the reserve price of \$2,500.00, for the Mack Truck #47, approved for disposal on February 17, 2021. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

**POLICE DISPOSITION OF PROPERTY: PACKET:** Mrs. Palmer stated that Chief Carroll submitted a packet of items he would like to dispose of and he would like to set a reserve on 2 identical items, which are the lightbars, with a reserve of \$100.00 each.

*Mr. Mueller made the motion, at the recommendation of the Police Chief, to dispose of township property on the documents entitled "Russell Police Department, Items for Auction" dated February 15, 2021, as each item is not needed for public use, is obsolete, or is unfit for public use. Mr. Gabram seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

**POLICE DISPOSITION OF PROPERTY: RESERVE:** *Mr. Gabram made the motion, at the request of the Police Chief, to set reserve prices of \$100.00 each for the two "Used Whelen Edge LFL Liberty Series LED Police Lightbars", approved for disposal on February 17, 2021. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

**ZONING MOVING ESTIMATE:** Mrs. Palmer stated that Mr. Wrench received an estimate from All-Seasons Remodeling Company for \$1,500.00 to take care of the moving expenses and the company is available to move the Zoning Department tomorrow.

Mr. Gabram stated that all furniture and filing cabinets will be included in the moving. Mr. Gabram stated that the painting has been completed and the new flooring has been installed. The only chores left to be done immediately are to get the telephones into the offices and the cameras installed. Mr. Gabram stated that a ramp will be installed outside once the weather breaks.

*Mr. Mueller made the motion, at the request of Facilities Manager Shane Wrench, to approve the moving of the Zoning Department furniture and cabinets from the basement to the new first floor location in the Administration Building per proposal #821 from All-Seasons Remodeling Company, dated February 16, 2021, for an amount not to exceed \$1,500.00. Mr. Gabram seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

**ROAD DEPT: ROAD MATERIALS:** *Mr. Mueller made the motion to approve the Road Superintendent's recommendation for road material bids for primary and secondary suppliers and authorize Fiscal Officer to advertise for bids. Mr. Gabram seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

**YEAR END CLOSE:** Mrs. Walder reported that 2020 fiscal year end was closed on Friday, February 12, 2021 completing a process that starts in November. Mrs. Walder thanked her two assistants for getting the process done. Mrs. Walder stated that the year end certificate was submitted to the County Budget Commission and the required Hinkle notes and filing were completed and confirmed. She stated that the required ads will be coming out this week in the paper. Mrs. Walder stated that a copy has been posted on the website, and a printed report is available at the office.

Mrs. Walder stated that the Township ended the year with 24 active funds, which include 6 new funds that were added in 2020. Two of funds were COVID related the 4 were the capital reserve funds. Mrs. Walder stated that the Township ended the year with revenue that was above the budgeted amounts for all major funds, except for Motor Vehicle License tax and Permissive tax. Mrs. Walder said once she receives the Amended Certificate back from the Budget Commission, she can finalize the Permanent Appropriations measures and bring them to the Board for action at the March 3 meeting.

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**UAN OPT-IN: DELINQUENT BANK REC NOTIFICATIONS:** Mrs. Walder stated this was a recommendation by the AOS, which is a checkbox in the UAN system to allow us to opt in to send an email notification to the trustees if we go longer than 60 days to perform a bank reconciliation. Mrs. Walder fully supports this but also noted that the Fiscal Office does the bank reconciliations well within 60 days.

*Mr. Gabram made the motion to adopt Resolution number 2021-5: a Resolution to authorize the activation of the UAN feature which notifies the trustees in the event of delinquent monthly bank reconciliation reports. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

**NOPEC ENERGIZED COMMUNITY RESOLUTION:** Mrs. Walder stated that each year in order to participate in the grant program the Board needs to pass a resolution based on language provided by NOPEC. In the grant program this year, the Township is eligible for \$13,500.00.

Mrs. Walder stated that the Township has about a week left to submit projects to utilize the balance of the 2020 money and she has not heard from any departments or Trustees. Mrs. Walder stated we have until February 25, 2021 to use money.

*Mr. Mueller made the motion to adopt Resolution 2021-4, a resolution authorizing all actions necessary to accept the NOPEC 2021 Energized Community Grant. Mr. Gabram seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

*Mr. Gabram made the motion to authorize Fiscal Officer Karen Walder to act as Russell Township's Local Contact and authorized signatory for documents related to the 2021 NOPEC Energized Community grant agreement. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

**APT CONFERENCE:** *Mr. Gabram made the motion to approve the attendance of three Fiscal Office staff members to the online version of the Association of Public Treasurers annual conference from July 18-21, 2021 for a cost of \$299.00 each. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

**CREDIT CARD PAYMENT METHOD:** Mrs. Walder stated that although we can still pay the Chase credit cards by paper check, we no longer have the ability to go right to a branch and have them process the payment because it is a different type of credit card account. Mrs. Walder stated with the challenge with the way mail has been, we have been looking at alternate ways of providing the payment. Mrs. Walder would like to use the Chase's portal Bill Pay service to pay the credit card. Ms. Port agrees that the USPS has been unreliable and does not want to receive late charges.

*Mr. Mueller made the motion to authorize the payment of JPMorgan Chase credit card accounts, previously established by Resolution 2020-56, using Chase Bill Pay and authorize the Fiscal Officer to make application and/or execute any required agreements in order to process such payments using the Chase Bill Pay method. Mr. Gabram seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

**GAS UTILITY PLAN CHANGE:** Mrs. Walder reported that the Township's energy broker has reached out to us because right now we are looking at very favorable gas rates and the forecast is that the prices may rise. Mrs. Walder stated that we have the ability to renew our natural gas agreement at a rate of \$2.99/mcf and will start October 1, 2021. This will be a 2 year agreement.

Ms. Port would like to see more pricing for different companies and would like to see documentation for other companies before signing up for a 2 year program. Mrs. Walder stated that we worked with the energy broker because they do all of the leg work for us. Mrs. Walder informed the Trustees that the prices are quoted on a 48 hour basis and if the board chooses not to move on this, the \$2.99 goes off the table. Mr. Gabram would like to move forward with a 3 year agreement and Mrs. Walder stated that the price quoted would also be \$2.99/mcf.

*Mr. Mueller made the motion to approve a change in the natural gas utility contract to a 36 month fixed contract at \$2.99/mcf, effective October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2024. Mr. Gabram seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

**FISCAL OFFICER AUTHORIZATION:** *Mr. Gabram made the motion to authorize Fiscal Officer Karen Walder to sign the Natural Gas Sales Agreement with Advantage Energy Partners LLC on behalf of Russell Township based on pricing dated February 16, 2021. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

**FISCAL OFFICER'S REPORT:** *Mr. Gabram made the motion to acknowledge receipt of the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2020 report from the Russell Township Fiscal Officer. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

**BANK RECONCILIATION & FINANCIAL REPORTS:** *Mr. Mueller made the motion to acknowledge receipt of the monthly bank reconciliation and financial reports for December, 2020, as submitted by Fiscal Officer Karen Walder. Mr. Gabram seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

**COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC WERE RECEIVED**

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**MUTUAL AID RESOLUTION:** Mr. Gabram stated he called the township's insurance company and they looked at the resolution and suggested 2 wording changes which would provide 100% coverage. Mr. Gabram stated he has to go back to the APA to make sure that the changes are okay and then it can come back to the Board. Once the Board accepts the resolution, it will then be sent to the other political entities for approval.

**INSIDE MILLAGE NON-COLLECTION:** Ms. Port stated that Mrs. Walder brought up at the last meeting that the Geauga County Auditor was going to contact the Ohio Department of Taxation with respect to seeing if there was going to be any relief to property tax for residents if the Township decreases inside millage. Mrs. Walder stated that the only question for the Ohio Department of Taxation is when such reduction could take effect. Mrs. Walder's understanding is if the board took action today, for example, under current practice would take effect for the next year's collection cycle. So any reduction would not apply until year's tax collection. Mrs. Walder stated that the question the Auditor had for the Ohio Department of Taxation was if an action was adopted, could that apply for the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 2021 tax collection, which would happen in July.

Mr. Mueller voiced his desire for a letter from the Budget Commission rescinding their previous directives before taking any action. Mr. Gabram wanted to know if any other Township's were doing this and at this time Mrs. Walder is not aware of any. Ms. Port asked what percent of Russell residents were affected and Mrs. Walder explained that is information the Treasurer likely would have. Ms. Port also noted ability to write off up to \$10,000 on tax returns. Mr. Gabram said he estimated a 1Mill reduction would save, on average, \$200 per homeowner, which on a \$3,500 tax bill is not significant. Ms. Port stated it is something worth to consider if there is an excess.

**GARAGE PROJECT UPDATE:** Ms. Port stated that Mrs. Palmer sent around to the Trustees to review the language for the criteria architect advertisement. Mrs. Palmer stated that the ad is ready to go as long as they approve all of the tasks that she has identified in the legal ad. Mrs. Palmer said the only change would be to the dates; March really isn't feasible and proposed that the results be announced in April. All submissions received will have to go through a \_\_\_\_\_ process which will take some time.

*Mr. Mueller made a motion to approve the placement of legal ad for criteria architect as amended. Mr. Gabram seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

**PURCHASE ORDERS AND BILLS WERE APPROVED AS ATTACHED.**

*Mr. Mueller made the motion to adjourn. Mr. Gabram seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

The meeting was adjourned at 7:33 pm.

Kristina Port, Chair

Karen Walder, Fiscal Officer

Recorded by: J. Sustar