

COMMUNITY ROOM

August 20, 2026

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm. by Vic Chair Port. Trustees Heutmayer was present. Chairperson Hare was absent. Board Administrator Warren Dovsek was present.

The following Department Heads were present: Fire Chief John Frazier and Asst. Fire Chief Nick Sambula.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

CLERK PRO TEM: In the absence of a Fiscal Officer, Board of Trustees Chair Christopher Hare, appoints Jessica Ezzone to serve as clerk pro tem.

MEETING MINUTES: *Ms. Port made the motion to accept the Minutes of the Regular Meeting, held on May 21, 2026, as presented by the Fiscal Office. Mrs. Heutmayer seconded the motion, and it passed.*

MEETING MINUTES: *Ms. Port made the motion to accept the Minutes of the Regular Meeting, held on June 4, 2026, as presented by the Fiscal Office. Mrs. Heutmayer seconded the motion, and it passed.*

MEETING MINUTES: *Ms. Port made the motion to accept the Minutes of the Special Meeting, held on June 22, 2026, as presented by the Fiscal Office. Mrs. Heutmayer seconded the motion, and it passed.*

MEETING MINUTES: *Ms. Port made the motion to accept the Minutes of the Regular Meeting, held on July 2, 2026, as presented by the Fiscal Office. Mrs. Heutmayer seconded the motion, and it passed.*

MEETING MINUTES: *Ms. Port made the motion to accept the Minutes of the Special Meeting, held on July 9, 2026, as presented by the Fiscal Office. Mrs. Heutmayer seconded the motion, and it passed.*

ROAD DEPT: GCEO: 2027 ROAD PROJECT REPORT: It was noted that the engineering association's report regarding the road project is due on August 28, 2026. The only question raised by the engineer so far pertained to the number of culverts and their inspection within the township.

FIRE DEPT: Asst. Fire Chief Sambula provided an update on a new ambulance. The vehicle which was ordered previously is now in production. The department expects to receive the new ambulance during the first week of December 2026.

FACILITIES: There was brief discussion regarding the township's recycling center. Mr. Kolk continues to monitor the site and photograph individuals illegally dumping prohibited items, such as truckloads of furniture. The Board commended the police department for their effective follow-up actions, which have included issuing warnings and citations to the offenders.

ZONING DEPT: The next Zoning Commission meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 26, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. in the community room.

FISCAL OFFICE: *Ms. Port made the motion to acknowledge the Bank Reconciliation & Financial Report for July of 2026, as presented by the Fiscal Office. Mrs. Heutmayer seconded the motion, and it passed.*

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC WERE RECEIVED

FAIRMOUNT CENTER: There was a request from the Fairmont Center for Children's Theater to use the Community Room for their productions on Saturdays from mid-January through April. The Fairmount Center asked for the community room deposit fee to be waived and the Trustees agreed.

COMMUNITY ROOM

August 20, 2026

Ms. Port made the motion to approve the use and waiver of fees associated with the Community Room by the Fairmount Center for children's theater on Saturdays from mid-January through April. Mrs. Heutmaker seconded the motion, and it passed.

LETTER TO SOUTH RUSSELL: There was brief discussion regarding the unsafe shoulder area on Hemlock Road that was previously brought up by Mr. Mesok. There was a discussion about sending a formal letter to the Village of South Russell about this concern.

Mr. Mesok stated he had already sent an email to the Mayor South Russell. The Mayor agrees it is dangerous and that there should be a guardrail. The county engineers looked into it and they stated that it meets minimal state requirements.

Ms. Port made the motion to approve sending a formal letter to the Township of South Russell regarding concern and potential need for a barrier on Hemlock Road within South Russell's jurisdiction. Mrs. Heutmaker seconded the motion, and it passed.

IT UPDATE: Brief update was given regarding the IT switch. Simvay has been working on most laptops and is currently backing up laptops and restoring archived emails from ADP. SharePoint setup is a work in progress, focusing on exporting and providing data internally. Most staff now have Duo, the multifactor authentication system, implemented for security and compliance with House Bill 96. ADP emails will be gone, and an offboarding process is scheduled for tomorrow.

IT: SHARED NETWORK DATA STORAGE: The township is exploring a system-wide shared data storage solution, that could be used by all departments. Once a solution is identified, the policy manual will need to be updated accordingly.

ADMIN. BLDG. SIDING QUOTE: *Ms. Port made the motion to authorize the Board Administrator to solicit Requests for Quotations (RFQs) for the replacement of the exterior siding on the Township Administrative Building. Mrs. Heutmaker seconded the motion, and it passed.*

CEMETERY: Mr. Dovsek brought up a concern regarding heirs who come into possession of unused cemetery lots and whether multiple heirs can divide and sell back these lots, especially if they are not in unanimous agreement. The existing policy is vague on this topic. The policy does state that sellbacks occur at the original sale price and that the deed must be surrendered. It was decided that without unanimity among all heirs, the sellback cannot proceed.

2027 BUDGET: POLICY LEVY: The discussion focused on the 2027 budget, particularly concerning the police levy and a potential millage reduction. A \$1.5 million reduction has been discussed with the Police Chief and is manageable, but anything beyond that could jeopardize cash carryover and police operations. A recommendation from the budget commission meeting was to not budget a 6% increase for police negotiations, as the union would see that as a starting point. It was suggested to start at 3% and negotiate up if necessary.

UPDATE: Mrs. Heutmaker stated that she and Mr. Dovsek took a drive around and looked at several properties in Hemlock Hills and on Chagrin Mills. Stated a tree has fallen through the roof of one property on Chagrin Mills due to a recent storm. The In-N-Out propane tank building was inspected, and combustible materials and improperly stored gas tanks were observed with no fire suppression system. The fire department has been asked to have the fire inspector check the property. An internal inspection is still pending.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: *Ms. Port made the motion to move into executive session to discuss the employment and compensation of public employee pursuant to ORC 121.22 (G) (1). Mrs. Heutmaker seconded the motion, and it passed.*

COMMUNITY ROOM

August 20, 2026

The meeting moved into executive session at 6:45 pm.

Item #1: Chief Frazier and Asst. Chief Sambula

In at 6:45 pm; out at 6:52 pm

Item #2: Chief Frazier and Asst. Chief Sambula

In at 6:52 pm; out at 6:55 pm

Item #3: Chief Frazier and Asst. Chief Sambula

In at 6:55 pm; out at 7:02 pm

Item #4: In at 7:02 pm; out at 7:09 pm

Mrs. Heutmaker made the motion to return to regular session. Ms. Port seconded the motion, and it passed.

The meeting moved to regular session at 7:09 pm.

FULL-TIME FIREFIGHTER: *Ms. Port made the motion to accept the Fire Chief's recommendation for the hiring of Jason Grassi as a full-time firefighter, with effective employment date to commence on September 16, 2026, in accordance with Salary Schedule 47, upon the successful completion of a BCI background check and physical. Mrs. Heutmaker seconded the motion, and it passed.*

FULL-TIME FIREFIGHTER: *Mrs. Heutmaker made the motion to accept the Fire Chief's recommendation for the hiring of Drake Force as a full-time firefighter in accordance with Salary Schedule 47, with effective employment date to commence on January 1, 2027, upon the successful completion of a BCI background check and physical. Ms. Port seconded the motion, and it passed.*

PART-TIME FIREFIGHTER: *Mrs. Heutmaker made the motion to accept the Fire Chief's recommendation for the hiring of Marcus Holzer as a part-time firefighter in accordance with Salary Schedule 47, upon the successful completion of a BCI background check and physical. Ms. Port seconded the motion, and it passed.*

LEGAL REPRESENTATION: *Mrs. Heutmaker made the motion of intent to retain legal counsel for Russell Twp. and approve the Board Administrator to solicit quotes from local attorneys, pending the review of quotation, retainer fee, and other relevant information. Ms. Port seconded the motion, and it passed.*

PURCHASE ORDERS AND BILLS WERE APPROVED AS ATTACHED.

Mrs. Heutmaker made the motion to adjourn. Ms. Port seconded the motion, and it passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:14 pm.

Christopher Hare, Chair

Fiscal Officer

Recorded by: J. Ezzone