

COMMUNITY ROOM

May 7, 2026

The meeting was called to order at 2:36 pm. by chairperson Hare. Trustees Port and Heutmaker were present. Board Administrator Melissa Palmer was present.

The following Department Heads were present: Police Chief Tom Swaidner, Road Superintendent Giovanni Maltese, Fire Chief John Frazier and Zoning Inspector Frank Kolk. Asst. Fire Chief Nick Sambula was present.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

Mr. Hare indicated that Fiscal Officer Karen Walder has resigned of her duties and her last day will be June 5th.

Mr. Hare apologized that live streaming is not up and running yet, but hopefully it will be soon.

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.

QUARTERLY REPORTS: *Ms. Port made the motion to accept the 1st Quarter 2026 departmental reports from Fire, Police, Road, and Zoning. Mrs. Heutmaker seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

MINUTES: *Mr. Hare made the motion to accept the revised minutes (previously approved on April 16, 2026) of the Special Meeting held on March 19, 2026, as presented. Mrs. Heutmaker seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

MINUTES: *Ms. Port made the motion to accept the minutes of the Regular Meeting held on March 19, 2026, as presented. Mrs. Heutmaker seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

MINUTES: *Ms. Port made the motion to accept the minutes of the Special Meeting held on March 30, 2026, as presented. The votes are as follows: Mrs. Heutmaker no; Ms. Port yes; Mr. Hare yes; and the motion passed.*

MINUTES: *Ms. Port made the motion to accept the minutes of the Regular Meeting held on April 2, 2026, as presented. Mrs. Heutmaker seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

GUEST: DAVE DIETRICH, ZONING FORMS: Mr. Dietrich presented updated zoning forms aligned with the December 2025 comprehensive amendment. Key changes include standardized form numbering by Zoning Secretary, Mrs. Guyer, updated Zoning Certificate Application, and new standalone forms for Consent Letter of Authorization, Signage Application, and Notice of Appeal of Error. The variance application was split into three distinct forms: Conditional Use Permit, Use Variance, and Area Variance, which will improve clarity for applicants and the Board of Zoning Appeals. The Agricultural Use Exemption and Complaint of Zoning Violation (Form 18) were also revised. Mr. Dietrich stated that all the forms were reviewed and approved by the APA. The BZA and Zoning Commission have been consulted, and the forms will be revisited at the May 21st meeting for final acceptance.

Mr. Dietrich stated that he had a consulting agreement with Township through the end of June, but he is donating all of his time and not charge the Township for his time as he worked on updating the forms. Mr. Hare expressed appreciation for all of Mr. Dietrich's help with the Township.

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WG COMMONS: PICKLE BALL FUNDING REQUEST: SARA SUSTIN, ED

CURTIS: The West Geauga Commons Board discussed their plans on converting two volleyball courts into pickleball courts. Initial cost was \$100,000, reduced to \$60,000 through competitive bidding. \$40,000 has been secured to cover asphalt and striping. The West

Geauga Commons Board is asking the Board for the remaining \$20,000, which is needed for fencing, nets, and poles. Mr. Hare stated will have to look into if it can be added to supplemental, if not the Board will discuss at the Budget Workshops.

DRIVEWAY APRON: REVISED STANDARD TEMPLATE/POLICY: Mr. Maltese requested approval from the Board on a revised driveway apron policy developed with the Geauga County Engineer's Office, which will help streamline policies with the Engineer's Office. It will give the Engineer's Office latitude to adjust for **depth** (slope) when they have to cut back 2 to 10 feet.

Mrs. Heutmaker made the motion to approve the revised Russell Township standard driveway apron policy as:

For home-owner replacements and new driveway installs, the first six feet from the roadway will be full depth asphalt.

For paving projects: The township will remove all existing concrete aprons and replace them with full depth asphalt. The amount of drive apron removed will be based on the recommendations from the Geauga County Engineer's office and final approval by the Russell Township Board of Trustees to provide a proper slope to make for a smooth ingress and egress between the drive and new surface, within the right of way.

The Township will treat all asphalt and gravel driveways based on recommendations from the Geauga County Engineers Office and final approval by the Russell Township Board of Trustees. Ms. Port seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Ms. Port asked that Mr. Kolk, Zoning Inspector, apprise new home construction applicants of the driveway apron policy as part of the zoning application forms.

ROAD: PLOW BLADES: Mr. Maltese is requesting approval for 8 carbide plow blades. Stated they are expected to last 2-3 years and are better for snow and ice removal because they stay sharper.

Mrs. Heutmaker made the motion to approve the purchase of 8 carbide plow blade setups from Winter Equipment., of Willoughby, Ohio, per quote ID QT43606, dated April 29, 2026, for an amount of \$13,695.61. Ms. Port seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

RE-STRIPE OF COUNTY LINE RD WITH HUNTING VALLEY: Mr. Maltese discussed the re-striping of County Line Road with Hunting Valley. County Line Road is split down the middle of Hunting Valley and Russell Township. Stated that Hunting Valley's engineer will break down the township's costs separately. Mr. Maltese stated it's a job that needs to be done all at once. Mr. Maltese stated they are looking into whether the white edge line is legally necessary. Mr. Maltese stated that once Hunting Valley has more information, they will send it to him. There was a discussion if it needed to be done this year, and Mr. Maltese stated there is a need because there are sections with no striping.

SUPP APPROP DISCUSSION: ROAD FUNDING:

\$78,113.00 2026 Chevrolet 3500 Crew Cab Chassis, Classic

Chevrolet, Mentor, #RSI025487 Mr. Maltese stated was going to replace a pickup truck but decided to get a utility truck with boxes on the back so his

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employees don't have to be lifting everything in and out of a bed of the truck. Stated they will be able to carry chainsaws and all of the equipment nice and safely.

\$177,293.00 On-lot, in stock, TS6.110 Tractor & 22' Boom Mower; Akron Tractor & Equip. Mr. Maltese stated they are giving a discount through Sourcewell, otherwise it would be \$211,511 and there would also be a trade-in but just don't know that amount until they inspect the mower. If ordered next year, will not receive the mower till 2028 and the price will probably be over \$212,000.

POLICE: SCHOOL SAFETY OFFICER WEST G MOU: The board approved a one-year Memorandum of Understanding with West Geauga Schools for a School Resource Officer at the elementary school, costing \$72,400 per half-year (salary, benefits, vehicle, operations). The SSO salary increased from \$58,000 to \$66,000. The agreement was shortened from three to one year due to uncertainty in union negotiations and tax changes.

Ms. Port made the motion to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between Russell Township Board of Trustees and the West Geauga Board of Education establishing a School Safety Officer (SSO) as a joint cooperative effort for the term July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2027. Mrs. Heutmaker seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

AUTHORIZED SIGNATORY: SSO: WEST G: *Mrs. Heutmaker made the motion to authorize Chair Christopher Hare to act as Russell Township's authorized signatory for the Memorandum of Understanding between Russell Township Board of Trustees and the West Geauga Board of Education for the term July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2027. Ms. Port seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

POLICE DEPT: Chief Swaidner gave a few announcements. First, Senior Safety Seminar is scheduled for Tuesday next week. The newspapers are more than welcome to attend, as are members of the board. The seminar will begin at 2:00 p.m. Chief Swaidner stated he put out a few more applications for Citizens Police Academy.

SUPP APPROP DISCUSSION: OPIOID SETTLEMENT FUNDS: FIRE FUNDING: The Fire Department requested two Ventilators at \$11,178.75 each, for a total of \$22,357.50 to improve patient care during long transports. Asst. Chief Sambula stated that he contacted the APA to make sure it was proper use of funds under the Opioid agreement.

SUPP APPROP DISCUSSION: FIRE FUNDING:

\$78,000 lease payment amount to place ambulance order Asst. Chief Sambula stated this lease payment is so they can place an order now for another ambulance that was scheduled for 2027 but if order now can lock in the price before it goes up next year. Stated that they are still waiting for the ambulance they order back in 2023 and hoping to get it in September.

\$79,000 4388 replacement, vehicle + upfitting There was discussion on replacing an Expedition emergency response vehicle that had previously been deferred during earlier budget workshops. Instead of replacing the SUV at that time, the department prioritized replacing a pickup truck, and adapted it for multiple uses, including EMS response and command operations, to remain fiscally responsible. This truck was a dedicated brush unit and have not been able to put the brush equipment back in the bed of the truck. They are currently using ATV/UTV equipped with a portable tank, and engine support until they can get the truck back once they receive the new Expedition.

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The proposed Expedition replacement would cost approximately \$79,000, including purchase through the state bid process and all emergency outfitting such as striping, lighting, and radio equipment. The current vehicle a 2018 model and is approaching the end of its useful service life.

\$33,678 Stryker Power Cot & Load System; NOT Capital Reserve

There was discussion on adding a third Stryker power load system for the third ambulance, and this would ensure that every ambulance in service would have the equipment available regardless of which vehicle is being used. Asst. Chief Sambula stated that it is budgeted for the full amount but they apply for a reimbursement grant to offset part of the expense.

FIRE DEPT: POND MANAGEMENT: AQUA DOC: *Ms. Port made the motion to accept the agreement between the Russell Township Board of Trustees and AQUADOC Lake & Pond Management, for the pond management program further described in the*

Contractor's proposal signed by AquaDoc on May 4, 2026, for the pond behind the Fire Station, for a cost of \$1,185.00, as approved by the APA, pending certification by the Fiscal Officer. Mrs. Heutmayer seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

AUTHORIZED SIGNATORY: *Mrs. Heutmayer made the motion to authorize Chair Christopher Hare to act as Russell Township's authorized signatory for the AQUADOC Lake & Pond Management proposal signed by AquaDoc on May 4, 2026. Mrs. Heutmayer seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

ACCEPT DONATION: *Mrs. Heutmayer made the motion to accept the donation of a gift card in the amount of \$100.00 to Augie's Pizza, from Nancy & Joe Mirenda as a donation to the Fire Department. Ms. Port seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

Ms. Port made the motion to approve the use of the \$100.00 for the Fire Department staff at the discretion of Fire Chief Frazier. Mrs. Heutmayer seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

FIRE: DORMITORY PROJECT: CHANGE ORDER APPROVAL: *Ms. Port made the motion, at the recommendation of James Ptacek, Larsen Architects, to approve Change Order No. 3 to the Fire Department Dormitory Project:*

<i>Change Requests per Owner</i>	<i>Add</i>	<i>\$6,494.20</i>
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resulting in a \$6,494.20 increase to the United Contractors, Inc. Contract Value to perform the action items identified in an email to Russell Township Trustees on May 6, 2026 from JP Ptacek, and on Change Order #3, from United Contractors, Inc., dated April 28, 2026, for a new contract value of \$160,765.85. Mrs. Heutmayer seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

AUTHORIZED SIGNATORY: *Ms. Port made the motion to authorize Chair Christopher Hare to sign Change Order #3 to the United Contractors, Inc. Contract, for the Fire Department Dormitory Project, on behalf of the Russell Township Board of Trustees, Change Order #3 dated April 28, 2026. Mrs. Heutmayer seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

FIRE: DORMITORY PROJECT: CHANGE ORDER APPROVAL: *Mrs. Heutmayer made the motion, at the recommendation of James Ptacek, Larsen Architects, to approve Change Order No. 4 to the Fire Department Dormitory Project:*

<i>Change Requests per Owner</i>	<i>Add</i>	<i>\$1,975.80</i>
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resulting in a \$1,975.80 increase to the United Contractors, Inc. Contract Value to perform the action items identified in an email to Russell Township Trustees on May

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6, 2026, 2026 from JP Ptacek, and on Change Order #4, from United Contractors, Inc., dated April 28, 2026, for a new contract value of \$162,741.65. Ms. Port seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

AUTHORIZED SIGNATORY: *Mrs. Heutmaker made the motion to authorize Chair Christopher Hare to sign Change Order #4 to the United Contractors, Inc. Contract, for the Fire Department Dormitory Project, on behalf of the Russell Township Board of Trustees, Change Order #4 dated April 28, 2026. Ms. Port seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

FIRE: DORMITORY PROJECT: CHANGE ORDER APPROVAL: *Ms. Port made the motion, at the recommendation of James Ptacek, Larsen Architects, to approve Change Order No. 5 to the Fire Department Dormitory Project:*

Change Requests per Owner	Add	\$1,962.20
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resulting in a \$1,962.20 increase to the United Contractors, Inc. Contract Value to perform the action items identified in an email to Russell Township Trustees on May 6, 2026 from JP Ptacek, and on Change Order #5, from United Contractors, Inc., dated April 28, 2026, for a new contract value of \$164,703.85. Mrs. Heutmaker seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

AUTHORIZED SIGNATORY: *Mr. Hare made the motion to authorize Chair Christopher Hare to sign Change Order #5 to the United Contractors, Inc. Contract, for the Fire Department Dormitory Project, on behalf of the Russell Township Board of Trustees, Change Order #5 dated April 28, 2026. Ms. Port seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

FIRE: DORMITORY PROJECT: CHANGE ORDER APPROVAL: *Ms. Port made the motion, at the recommendation of James Ptacek, Larsen Architects, to approve Change Order No. 6 to the Fire Department Dormitory Project:*

Change Requests per Owner	Add	\$3,244.50
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resulting in a \$3,244.50 increase to the United Contractors, Inc. Contract Value to perform the action items identified in an email to Russell Township Trustees on May 6, 2026 from JP Ptacek, and on Change Order #6, from United Contractors, Inc., dated April 28, 2026, for a new contract value of \$167,948.35. Mrs. Heutmaker seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

AUTHORIZED SIGNATORY: *Mrs. Heutmaker made the motion to authorize Chair Christopher Hare to sign Change Order #6 to the United Contractors, Inc. Contract, for the Fire Department Dormitory Project, on behalf of the Russell Township Board of Trustees, Change Order #6 dated April 28, 2026. Ms. Port seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

FACILITIES: WASTE HAULING PRICING: Brief discussion on switching a waste hauler, but Mr. Kolk recommended it was best to stay with Waste Management at this time. Stated that the Township has a long history with Waste Management and use them for Scrap Day events as well. There are terms and conditions, and the Board asked Mr. Kolk to send those to the APA for review.

RES 2026-13: TRANSFER FUNDS: *Mrs. Heutmaker made the motion to approve Resolution 2026-13: a resolution requesting the annual transfers of Capital Projects Funds (Buildings) as allowed by the ORC. Ms. Port seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

RES 2026-14: TRANSFER FUNDS: *Mrs. Heutmaker made the motion to approve Resolution 2026-14: a resolution requesting the annual transfers of Capital Projects Funds (Vehicles) as allowed by the ORC. Ms. Port seconded the motion, and it passed*

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unanimously.

TRANSFER FUNDS: ROAD: VEHICLES: *Ms. Port made the motion requesting the transfer of \$185,500 from the Road & Bridge to Road Vehicle Reserve Fund. Mrs. Heutmaker seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

TRANSFER FUNDS: FIRE: STRYKER POWER COT: *Mrs. Heutmaker made the motion requesting the transfer of \$33,678.00 from the Fire District to Fire Ambulance & EMS Fund. Ms. Port seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

TRANSFER FUNDS: FIRE: AMBUL & VEH: *Ms. Port made the motion requesting the transfer of \$157,000 from the Fire District to Fire Vehicle Reserve Fund. Mrs. Heutmaker seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

1Q FO REPORT: *Ms. Port made the motion to acknowledge receipt of the 1st Quarter 2026 report from the Russell Township Fiscal Officer. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and the votes are as follows: Mrs. Heutmaker no; Ms. Port yes; Mr. Hare yes; and the motion passed.*

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC WERE RECEIVED

STATE CAPITAL GRANT FUNDS: *Mrs. Heutmaker made the motion approving the acquisition of items as identified below to be covered by the remaining funds from the State Capital Grant (\$16,333.13) and the General Fund (\$147.49):*

- *(6) Costco Polywood 5-piece patio dining sets – \$8,399.94*
- *(6) Home Depot Umbrellas and bases – \$533.64*
- *Inside furniture – \$5,520.74 (includes freight, delivery, and installation)*
 - *(16) chairs with dolly*
 - *(3) 8' tables*
 - *(3) 6' round tables*

Subtotal for Furniture: \$14,454.32, Option 2: emailed to trustees on Monday, May 4, 2026

FRP: white pebbled finish, installed by ASM in the Community Room Furniture Storage Room, per ASM serial letter #00027, dated April 23, 2026, for an amount of \$2,026.30, emailed to trustees on Monday, May 4, 2026. Ms. Port seconded the motion, and the votes are as follows: Mrs. Heutmaker yes; Ms. Port yes; Mr. Hare no; and the motion passed.

DEHUMIDIFIER: *Ms. Port made the motion approving the acquisition of an Alorair Commercial Dehumidifier 113 pint, Sentinel HD55, for an amount up to \$590.00 for the Town Hall basement, to be paid for by the General Fund. Mrs. Heutmaker seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

COMMUNITY DAY FUNDS: *Ms. Port made the motion approving additional funds for the Community Day Event to be held on July 18, 2026 for an amount up to \$3,000.00. Mrs. Heutmaker seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

IT PROJECT: SIMVAY: *Ms. Port discussed the consolidation of IT services under one vendor to meet Ohio House Bill 96 cybersecurity requirements and upcoming ADA website compliance. Stated that she reached out to three vendors to get quotes: Simvay, ISSquared, and Acendex. Simvay's proposal was selected due to lower cost, existing police upgrades, and inclusion of 35 shared support hours. The Trustees have some concerns whether the APA will be able to review a contract from another IT vendor due to conflicts of interest, since Prosecutor Flaiz is on the ADP Board. Ms. Port stated she will reach out to the APA to see if she will need to recuse herself, and if so, the Board will have to reach out to outside legal counsel. There was discussion about adding funds to the supplemental appropriations for Fire and Police*

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Departments for tech services. Each Department needs \$10,000 to help cover costs. Trustees discussed and agreed about having the General Fund cover all startup costs.

Mrs. Heutmaker made the motion to accept a contract from Simvay. Ms. Port seconded the motion, and the votes are as follows: Mrs. Heutmaker yes; Ms. Port yes; Mr. Hare abstained; and the motion passed.

AUTHORIZED SIGNATORY: *Mrs. Heutmaker made the motion to authorize Kristina Port to digitally sign the 2026 Drop Off Improvement Grant Agreement on behalf of the Russell Township Board of Trustees. Ms. Port seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

AI RECORDING: There was brief discussion on AI recording options to help with getting the minutes processed sooner. Mrs. Ezzone is going to email the Trustees with two options she looked into.

COURT REPORTER: There was a brief discussion about getting a court reporter for the upcoming Budget Workshops. The Trustees agree this is a good idea to have everything well documented. Mrs. Ezzone stated she will get it scheduled.

MEMORIAL DAY: Ms. Port gave a quick status update on the planning for Memorial Day. Stated that Shannon Stanich is the guest speaker. Stated that some residents volunteered to make cupcakes and treats.

AMERICA 250: Mr. Hare gave a quick status update on America 250 planning. Stated he is working with the Historical Society to get information on veterans who served that are buried in Russell Township. It is going to be held at the Town Hall on June 27th at 10:30 am.

OP&F ENROLLMENT: There was discussion about adding \$18,000 in supplemental funding to the Fire Department budget to cover OP&F pension costs for the new full-time firefighter.

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

The meeting moved into executive session at 5:36 pm.

Item #1: Melissa Palmer, Chief Frazier, and Jessica Ezzone

In at 5:36 pm; out at 5:38 pm

Item #2: Melissa Palmer, Chief Frazier, and Jessica Ezzone

In at 5:38 pm; out at 5:40 pm

Item #3: Melissa Palmer, Chief Frazier, and Jessica Ezzone

In at 5:40 pm; out at 5:40 pm

Item #4: Melissa Palmer and Jessica Ezzone

In at 5:40 pm; out at 5:43 pm

Item #5: Melissa Palmer and Jessica Ezzone

In at 5:43 pm; out at 6:00 pm

Item #6: Melissa Palmer and Jessica Ezzone

In at 6:00 pm; out at 6:03 pm

Mr. Hare made the motion to return to regular session. Mr. Port seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously

The meeting moved to regular session at 6:05 pm.

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FIRE HIRE: *Ms. Port made the motion to hire David R. Cooley as a part-time Firefighter/Paramedic with the Russell Township Fire Department at the beginning rate, per Salary Schedule 45, effective June 1, 2026. Mrs. Heutmaker seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

FIRE HIRE: *Ms. Port made the motion to hire Robert John Parisi as a part-time Firefighter/EMT at the one-year rate, per Salary Schedule 45, effective June 1, 2026. Mrs. Heutmaker seconded the motion, and the votes are as follows: Mrs. Heutmaker yes; Ms. Port yes; Mr. Hare abstained and the motion passed.*

FIRE-EMS RECRUIT APPOINTMENT: *Mrs. Heutmaker made the motion to appoint Aiden Sweeney to the position of Fire-EMS Recruit, effective May 8, 2026. Ms. Port seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

CITIZENS' PARK APPOINTMENT: *Mrs. Heutmaker made the motion to appoint Brent Behnke to the 3-year term on the Citizens' Park Board of Commissioners expiring the 2nd Monday in May, 2029, effective May 11, 2026. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and the votes are as follows: Mrs. Heutmaker abstained; Ms. Port yes; Mr. Hare yes; and the motion passed.*

PAY RATE: BOARD ADMINISTRATOR: *Mrs. Heutmaker made the motion to adopt the pay range of \$34.10 - \$42.63 (as recommended by Clemans Nelson) for the new full-time Board Administrator position. Ms. Port seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

PURCHASE ORDERS AND BILLS WERE APPROVED AS ATTACHED.

Mr. Hare made the motion to adjourn. Mrs. Heutmaker seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:10 pm.

Christopher Hare, Chair

Karen Walder, Fiscal Officer

Recorded by: J. Ezzone