

RUSSELL COMMUNITY ROOM

January 15, 2026

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. Trustees Hare, Port and Heutmaker were present. The Board Administrator and the Fiscal Officer were also present.

The following Department Heads were present: Fire Chief John Frazier, Police Chief Tom Swaidner and Road Superintendent Giovanni Maltese.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

POLICE SWEARING IN CEREMONY: Detective Adam LaMonica

Welcome by Chief Tom Swaidner
Oath by Board Chair Christopher Hare
Pinning & Photos

FIRE SWEARING IN CEREMONY: Lieutenant William Thomas

Lieutenant Frank Gromowsky
Lieutenant Jason Grassi
Welcome by Chief John Frazier
Oath by Board Chair Christopher Hare
Pinning & Photos

QUARTERLY REPORTS: *Ms. Port made the motion to accept the 4th Quarter 2025 departmental reports from the Police, Fire, Road, Facilities, & Zoning. Mrs. Heutmaker seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

POLICE:

SLCGP Cyber Grant – Police Chief said he is still waiting to hear back whether we can submit for reimbursement of a project already completed.

The Board discussed an invoice they received from ADP for services and provided a recap of the situation from the Board's perspective. Questions were asked as to why the Police was being billed when they were told multiple times they were not a client of ADP and ADP was not their vendor; why was this billed emailed to the Board, Fiscal Officer, the newspapers, but not the Police Department; why the bill was emailed and not mailed like the normal quarterly bills from ADP; why wasn't this included on the quarterly bill from ADP; whether anyone notified ADP to stand down once the Police had completed the move to a .gov domain; why the Township was billed \$750 for attending a Trustee meeting; and why the Township would be charged when we already pay for ADP services through property taxes. The Board has many questions about the invoice and the contract with ADP, and they will contact the Township's APA to hopefully get them answered before any decisions are made.

FIRE: ACCEPT DONATION: The Fiscal Officer doesn't recommend accepting the donation from Junction Auto Sales Inc. of \$1,000.00 to the Fire Department, due to Junction Auto being a vendor. Trustee Port stated that the Board will decide whether to accept the donation or not. The Fiscal Officer acknowledged that the Township has received and accepted donations from Junction Auto in the past, and that her concern in no way implies anything improper by either vendor or Chief. She believes the Township should not accept donations from companies we do business with. She conferred with the Prosecutor, and he advised against accepting the donation. She said had the donation come from an individual who happened to be the owner of a business, she would not have these concerns. She said that it is in both the Township's and the vendor's best interest to avoid even an appearance of impropriety and that it is clear from the AOS bulletins and the

RUSSELL COMMUNITY ROOM

January 15, 2026

news headlines that we are in a different political climate. She stated that she does not wish to carry the burden of a potential finding for recovery from accepting a substantial donation from an improper source. Should the Trustees decide to accept the donation over the Fiscal Officer's objection, then the responsibility would shift to them. Trustee Port requested that the Fiscal Officer be more transparent about discussions with Mr. Flaiz or the APA about township matters and keep the Board informed. The Board will contact the APA about this matter before making their decision and advise for the check to be held until then. Trustee Heutmaker would like to create a policy on accepting donations and she will work with the APA on that matter.

ACCEPT DONATION: *Ms. Port made the motion to accept the donation from Charles Zisinger of the \$100.00 Guido's Gift Card to the Fire Department. Mrs. Heutmaker seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

Ms. Port made the motion to approve the use of the \$100.00 gift card donation for the Fire Department at the discretion of the Fire Chief. Mrs. Heutmaker seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

The Fire Chief thanked the Road Department for help fixing a drainage issue and also sealing the driveway in front of the Station.

The Fire Chief also updated the Board that the driveway is the only part left to be redone and will be done in the spring.

ROAD: The Road Superintendent advised the Board that new pumps are in, and they are working through some issues. He said they will still do manually tracking until he gets all the user data entered.

The Road Superintendent advised the Board that he has spoken to Verdantas and the EPA and that if the Township passes a resolution that any property in the township that is over one acre of hard area has to construct a bioswale, then the township doesn't need to spend an estimated one hundred and twenty thousand dollars to put a bioswale in at the Road Department. The Road Superintendent would like to ask Verdantas to write the resolution for the Township, as they have written this type of resolution before. The Road Superintendent also advised the Board that he notified the County Engineer of this decision a month and a half ago and received no response.

The Board was also informed that the Road Department doesn't have a salt shortage, the bin is full and there has been no problem getting salt when it's ordered.

Trustee Port asked the Road Superintendent if he could get a "don't block driveway" sign and put it up at the recycling center, as there have been complaints that residents can't pull out of the recycling center because cars block the driveway when waiting at the light. He will contact ODOT about this.

ROAD: FUNDS REQUEST: *Mrs. Heutmaker made the motion to approve funds in the amount of \$900.00 for January through March 2026 for team building, communications development, & enrichment experiences for the Road Department staff at the discretion of the Road Superintendent. Ms. Port seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

RUSSELL COMMUNITY ROOM

January 15, 2026

ANNUAL HIGHWAY MILEAGE CERTIFICATION: *Ms. Port made the motion to certify that Russell Township, as of December 31, 2025, was responsible for maintaining 55.455 miles of public roads. Mrs. Heutmaker seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

GO GREEN GRANT: AUTHORIZED SIGNATORY: The Board Administrator said that an authorized signer was needed for the Go Green Grant. The grant will be for new player benches at Bob Hall Field, constructed of recycled materials. The grant maximum is \$3,500 and the estimated cost for the benches would be \$3,229. The Road Department saved the township about several thousand dollars by removing the old benches and bleachers, they will also install the new benches when they arrive.

The Board Administrator advised the Board that the D.I.G. grant will be submitted by the end of February for a small tool shed and more trees for the recycling center. The Board can ask the Facilities Manager if they have questions about that grant.

Ms. Port made the motion to designate Amy Heutmaker to act as Russell Township's authorized signatory for documents related to the 2026 Go Green Community Grant to Geauga-Trumbull Solid Waste Management District. Mrs. Heutmaker seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

FISCAL OFFICER: The Fiscal Officer noted that she sent out handouts to the Board from the County Fiscal Officers' quarterly meeting she recently attended.

The Fiscal Officer thanked her staff for the work put into getting the first payroll of the year ready as many changes had to be made.

The Fiscal Officer will be traveling from January 20th through January 28th and February 4th through 6th, the best way to contact her is via email.

CREDIT CARD AUTHORIZATION: HEUTMAKER: *Ms. Port made the motion to authorize a township credit card to be issued to Trustee Amy Heutmaker for expenses related to Russell Township business and per the Russell Township Personnel Policy Manual. Mrs. Heutmaker seconded the motion, and it passed. The vote: Mrs. Heutmaker – Abstain, Ms. Port – Yes, Mr. Hare – Yes.*

CREDIT CARD AUTHORIZATION: PORT: *Mrs. Heutmaker made the motion to authorize a township credit card issued to Trustee Kristina Port for expenses related to Russell Township business and per the Russell Township Personnel Policy Manual. Ms. Port seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

SALES TAX POLICY: *Ms. Port made the motion to approve the Sales Tax Reimbursement Policy, as prepared by Clemans Nelson Associates and emailed to trustees by Karen Walder on January 12, 2026. Mrs. Heutmaker seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

The Fiscal Officer updated the Board that the final junk vehicle notices were sent out, but the waiting period extends through the end of the month. She also stated that the house is completely down.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC WERE RECEIVED.

RUSSELL COMMUNITY ROOM

January 15, 2026

CRWP MEMBERSHIP 2026: *Ms. Port made the motion to approve the 2026 membership dues expense of \$4,465.00 (2025 \$4,314.00) for the Chagrin River Watershed Partners, Inc. Mrs. Heutmayer seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

The Board discussed America 250 and that Russell Township 200th birthday will be in 2027.

The Board Administrator reminded the Board that Russell is hosting the April Geauga County Township Association meeting and needs to get arrangements started.

The Board Administrator advised the Board that the County Auditor would like contact information for a township representative to direct residents to when they call the Auditor's office with tax bill questions. The Township will provide the Auditor's office with an email address.

CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE: *Ms. Port made the motion to approve reasonable and necessary expenses for Frank Kolk and two members of the Road Department to attend the Ohio Safety Congress and Expo from March 11-13, 2026, in Columbus. Mrs. Heutmayer seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

NOPEC: The Board Administrator noted that there are a few community events for NOPEC grant funding and asked if there were any others to notify her so it can be added to the funding request.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: *Mrs. Heutmayer made the motion to move into executive session to discuss the employment and compensation of a 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 8:03 p.m.

There were three items for discussion in this executive session, and the following people were invited to attend.

Item #1: Board Administrator, Fiscal Officer.

In at 8:03 p.m.; out at 8:05 p.m.

Item #2: Board Administrator, Fiscal Officer.

In at 8:05 p.m.; out at 8:25 p.m.

Item #3: Board Administrator, Fiscal Officer.

In at 8:25 p.m.; out at 8:33 p.m.

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

The meeting moved into regular session at 8:33 p.m.

RUSSELL COMMUNITY ROOM

January 15, 2026

BZA: RESIGNATION: DUSHAN BOUCHEK: *Ms. Port made the motion to accept the resignation of Dushan Boucek from the Russell Township Board of Zoning Appeals. Mrs. Heutmaker seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:34 p.m.

PURCHASE ORDERS AND BILLS WERE APPROVED AS ATTACHED.

Chris Hare, Chair

Karen Walder, Fiscal Officer

Recorded by: J. Dorka