TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES REGULAR

Community Room October 2, 2025

The meeting was called to order at 2:01 p.m.by chairperson Port. Trustee Hare was present. Board Administrator Melissa Palmer and Fiscal Officer Karen Walder were present.

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

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

MINUTES: *Mr. Hare made the motion to accept the minutes of the Regular Meeting held on August 21, 2025, as presented. Ms. Port seconded the motion, and it passed.*

Mr. Hare made the motion to accept the minutes of the Regular Meeting held on September 4, 2025, as presented. Ms. Port seconded the motion, and it passed.

Mr. Mueller joined the meeting at 2:04 pm.

Mr. Mueller made the motion to accept the minutes of the Regular Meeting held on September 18, 2025, as amended. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

GUESTS: SRV COUNCILMEN: MARK E. PORTER, GERALD CANTON, & CHRIS BERGER. FISCAL OFFICER DANIELLE ROMANOWSKI. Mr. Porter thanked the trustees for the opportunity to address a couple of issues.

1. **DRAINAGE PROJECT AT FAIRVIEW/HAZELWOOD/HEMLOCK RD:** Mr. Porter stated that they are having a bid opening tomorrow and depending on what the bids show, whether they are acceptable or not, they will have final costs to bring to the trustees for consideration. Stated that there is a drainage problem on the northwestern part of South Russell, which borders Russell Township. The drainage problem on Fairview is what this project is designed to correct. The project estimate from the engineer is $96,000 and OPWC has granted them a 50% contribution, which would reduce the cost down to approximately $46,000 and was hoping Russell Township would pay for half of that. Following the a bid opening they will have hard numbers to work with. Their next village meeting is on October 13th, at which they hope to make an award and will communicate that back to the trustees. The trustees asked that a copy of the OPWC award letter be sent to them.
2. **REQUEST FOR INFORMATION & BID:** Discussion about partnering with South Russell for the purpose of Fire/EMS services provided to South Russell Village. Mr. Porter stated he sent a letter to the trustees with some questions to get it going. Their contract runs out December 31st and they currently have a proposal from Chagrin Valley Fire Department. A few members of the South Russell board are taken back by the pricing structure, which appears to be 12/12/12 percent increase year to year. Paying approximately $450,000 this year and with the pricing structure, after year three will be paying roughly $800,000. Mr. Porter stated that in 2013 the trustees were approached about possibly partnering with South Russell, but it did not go forward with it at that time. Mr. Porter stated that they have had no complaints about Chagrin Valley and response times are very favorable. Mr. Porter understands through the years that the Township has provided mutual aid and the Fire Department's response time has been excellent. Mr. Porter stated that they would like some more information from the Township before they move forward. Mr. Porter stated that if there is any more information that the trustees or Fire Department needs to know to let him know and he will get back to them. Mr.

Mueller asked Asst. Fire Chief Sambula how soon he could get qualified information back, but Asst. Fire Chief Sambula doesn't know exactly what that time frame would be without knowing exactly all the information that they need to request. It would depend upon how fast they can develop the questions and then how fast South Russell can provide the information back. Asst. Fire Chief Sambula stated that if a lot of the information is similar from the 2013 request, he believes they can response in a timely manner. Mr. Porter stated that if they decided to go with Russell they would no longer need to be with Chagrin Valley Dispatch, which they pay $60,000 a year. Mr. Hare had some questions regarding staffing and equipment, and Mr. Porter stated his understanding that Russell and Chagrin Valley are very comparable in staffing and equipment. Mr. Porter added that response times are very similar. Mr. Porter also said that their legal counsel could draft an Agreement. Mr. Mueller expressed concern about an agreement being held up for legal review.
Ms. Port asked if there are any provisions in the contract as to where patients can be transported and Asst. Fire Chief Sambula stated that they will accommodate patients request when it's applicable, but there are laws set in place for certain conditions, such as cardiac care, stroke care or trauma.
Mrs. Walder stated that she is supportive of investigating ways to control costs, spread our costs and serve our constituents without significant tax increases, however it shouldn't be done on an artificial timeline. Mrs. Walder stated that the question for the Chief is whether the current staff and equipment are sufficient to provide service starting January 1, 2026. Mrs. Walder asked how the Board would ensure that the Fire/EMS services to our own residents would not suffer.
Asst. Fire Chief Sambula stated regardless of the outcome he wants to make it known that they've worked very well with Chagrin Valley Fire Department for the past 50 years. He stated that the Russell Fire Department is grateful for that relationship and highly respects them as a department. Stated that they do mutual training and want ongoing collaboration efforts on how they can service the greater communities better through different auto aids not just on the fire side but on the EMS side. Asst. Fire Chief Sambula stated regardless of the outcome, it is imperative that the relationship between the fire departments maintain that same level as it is today so they can continue to collaborate and work the best way possible to the greater community.
Ms. Port stated that Fiscal Officer needs to be kept informed. Mrs. Walder reminded the Board that they have already approved the budget for 2026 and have already received our certificate of estimated resources. From fiscal perspective, the Township has zero ability to recognize additional revenue or add additional expenditures starting Jan 1.
Mrs. Walder has concern since the Board invested over $20,000 for a study for the Fire Department but haven't had a public hearing yet to present the study results to the residents. Mrs. Walder asked the Board if they were willing to sacrifice study goals to look at this initiative. Ms. Port stated that they can look at their 2026 schedule and can always make adjustments. The Board Administrator said the public presentation is scheduled for the November 20 meeting. Mrs. Walder asked the Board to clarify that any proposal should not result in Russell taxpayers subsidizing service to South Russell Village. Mr. Mueller said that the agreement must be beneficial to all.

SRV FIRE/EMS SERVICES REQUEST: TRUSTEE DIRECTION: *Mr. Mueller made the motion that the Board of Trustees directs the Russell Township Fire Department leadership to pursue informational inquiries and subsequently to prepare a bid for the Russell Township Fire Department to provide the Fire/EMS services as requested by South Russell Village. Ms. Port seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

CENTERRA: UPDATE: Mr. Maltese stated that Portman Electric was given the PO to order all of the explosion proof conduit which has a lead time on it but hasn't heard back when it will be available. Stated that Charlie from Centerra came in and the goal is once everything is there to coordinate with Portman to get everything installed. Hoping to only be down for one day.

Mr. Mueller stepped away at 2:59 pm.

ROAD DEPT: PEKIN ROAD PAVING: Mr. Maltese stated that there is a section about 450' long and 20' wide by the Newbury line that has been continually patched, and some the patches are failing and not worth patching it more. Mr. Maltese stated he received two quotes and is recommending going with Ronyak Paving. Mr. Maltese stated his department has the manpower to cut headers on both sides to make a transition and do traffic control, which helped offset the cost a bit. Mrs. Walder stated this was discussed and there are current appropriations for this project.

Mr. Hare made the motion to authorize the asphalt overlay repair of Pekin Road by Ronyak Paving, Inc. for an expense of $16,672.50, based on a proposal emailed from Sam, of Ronyak Paving, Inc to Giovanni Maltese dated September 25, 2025. Ms. Port seconded the motion, and it passed.

PEKIN ROAD: AUTHORIZED SIGNATORY: *Mr. Hare made the motion to authorize Kristina Port to act as signatory for the asphalt overlay repair of Pekin Road, Ronyak Paving, Inc proposal dated September 25, 2025. Ms. Port seconded the motion, and it passed.*

Mr. Mueller stepped back in at 3:01 pm.

POSITION DESCRIPTION: FIREFIGHTER LIEUTENANT: Asst. Fire Chief Sambula stated some changes were made to make the position description current with present day, mainly who they report to because they have a vacancy in the captain's position. Another change was to a minimum qualification of EMT-A, that is no longer recognized by the state, to just EMT and paramedic.

Mr. Hare made the motion to adopt the position description for Firefighter Lieutenant, effective October 2, 2025. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

PROMOTIONAL PROCESS: FIREFIGHTER LIEUTENANT: Asst. Chief Sambula stated they are requesting authorization for promotions. Stated they sat with the Fiscal Officer to make sure the department could incur some potential differences in the hourly wage. Stated they developed a draft to conduct the promotional process up to four Firefighter Lieutenant positions. Mrs. Walder clarified that promotions would be effective after January 1, 2026.

Mr. Hare made the motion to authorize the leadership of the Russell Fire Department to engage in the promotional process for up to four Firefighter Lieutenant positions. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

POLICE DEPT: Chief Swaidner stated that they have completed six weeks of the eight-week Citizens Police Academy program and believes it's been a huge benefit to the residents that are in attendance to learn more about the department and see behind the scenes of what the officers do.
Chief Swaidner stated that they will have Cram the Cruiser from October 6 through November 10th. They will be collecting nonperishable food items along with new coats, hats, and gloves of all sizes. All proceeds will benefit Geauga County JFS &

Families.
Chief Swaidner stated they have Coffee with a Cop event coming up on October 18th.

POLICE: SIMVAY UPDATE: Mr. Hare reported that after the meeting the Chief will be turning in an unblock form to ADP following some clarification that had to work through. Chief Swaidner stated that prior to the meeting, ADP gave Mr. Hare a domain unblock form. Last week ADP received a rundown report from Simvay describing everything that took place so just needed the unblock form filled out.

ZONING DEPT: Mr. Dietrich stated that 14 permits have been issued. Three variances were granted at the last BZA meeting. Stated the Zoning Commission had a Public Hearing regarding the rewrite of the zoning resolution and will continue the hearing this month. Mr. Dietrich stated that Mr. Kolk has been doing lots of inspections and doing his best on the backlog. Mr. Dietrich stated that they will be coming up with a system to do tracking.
Mr. Dietrich stated that Mr. Kolk took some pictures at the Ridgewood property and sent them to the APA. Mrs. Palmer stated that the turnaround from Mr. Kolk and APA have been fantastic.

JUNK CARS: IDENTIFICATION/REMOVAL: Mrs. Palmer stated that she prepared a resolution regarding the junk cars on the property and placing the cost on the tax duplicate. Mr. Mueller stated that he tried calling Mr. Drain again and has not heard back. Mr. Hare stated that he has been talking to the APA to follow the ORC regarding junk vehicles. Mrs. Palmer has drafted the letters identifying the junk vehicles and a resolution stating the trustees intend to remove the junk vehicles. Mr. Mueller asked about whatever the cost is for removal and demo will be charged back to the property. Mrs. Palmer stated that the last line of the resolution says that the cost would be added to the tax duplicate and then put a lien on the property. Mrs. Palmer stated that one detail of the resolution is terms by which you can identify junk vehicles and one of the vehicles did not fit the terms because you must show excessive damage and the Mercedes does not exhibit extensive damage. Mrs. Palmer stated that whoever gets the contract to do the demolition is going to have to move the Mercedes around on the lot or work around it and it may make the demolition a little bit more expensive. Mr. Mueller asked Mrs. Palmer if she had the vehicle's number and Mrs. Palmer stated that it is not required to provide VINs or anything specific on the vehicles.

Mr. Mueller made the motion to approve Resolution 2025-28: Identifying and determining that motor vehicles at 8460 Ridgewood Lane, Russell Township, are junk motor vehicles, and that the Russell Township Board of Trustees intends to remove the junk vehicles pursuant to ORC 505.871 not sooner than 14 days after notice is given per the ORC. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

THEN & NOW PO: ARCHITECTURAL/DESIGN SERVICES: FIRE DORM: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to approve a Then and Now Purchase Order in the amount of $12,000.00, for Architectural and design services for the Fire Dept dormitory and locker room renovation, by Larsen Architects, based on Requisition F-135 submitted by Chief Frazier, dated September 23, 2025. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

FISCAL OFFICER: Mrs. Walder stated that next Wednesday the Fiscal Office will be closed. If anyone needs a credit card, to sign it out by noon on Tuesday.
Mrs. Walder stated since we are heading into 4th quarter, all departments should have the bulk of their capital spending encumbered and that her office will be starting to work on temporary appropriations and plans on having that ready for the November 6th meeting. Stated that temporary appropriations support the Township's

expenditures until year end is completed and we receive the first amended certificate and permanent appropriations are approved. Mrs. Walder stated that funding for capital projects is generally not included in temporary appropriations unless there is a specific need for funding in the first quarter. Asked the Department Heads to look at their capital projects and let her know if any funding would be needed for first quarter.

SALARY SCHED #42: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to adopt Salary Schedule 42, effective October 1, 2025. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC WERE RECEIVED

CYBERSECURITY PROGRAM/POLICY: Mrs. Palmer stated had a special meeting adopting three policies with three resolutions. Mr. Hare thanked Mrs. Palmer for all the hours and hard work she put into getting this together.

FLAGPOLE REPAIR: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to authorize the repair of the Russell Township flagpole (SR87/SR306) with an internal halyard and wire core rope, labor, lift and all accessories included for an expense of $2,100.00, based on Estimate #1708, submitted by The Flag Store LLC, Newbury, OH, dated September 17, 2025. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

FLAGPOLE REPAIR: AUTHORIZED SIGNATORY: *Mr. Hare made the motion to authorize Kristina Port to act as signatory for the repair of the Russell Township flagpole, for The Flag Store LLC estimate, dated September 17, 2025. Ms. Port seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

CJ LANDSCAPE UPDATE: Ms. Port stated that Mrs. Walder sent out an email that one of drains isn't connected to the basin. Mr. Morgan saw it and asked CJ Landscape to give an estimate to fix the issue. Mr. Morgan suggested contacting the contractor, so Ms. Dorka reached out to ACM and ACM said they were told not to do anything. Mrs. Palmer stated research needs to be done regarding this.
Mrs. Walder stated that Mrs. Ezzone has been working with CJ Landscape and Mr. Morgan. CJ Landscape has started the project work and is planning to start planting over the weekend.
Mrs. Ezzone has been working with Mr. Morgan, and he wanted to come back and remind the trustees that there was discussion of placing a bench right outside the front door. Mrs. Ezzone had Mr. Morgan provide estimates for some benches. Mrs. Walder stated that there was talk about using pillars from the foundation of seating areas and pointed out this would be optimal time to place them while they are doing the work but hasn't been asked of CJ Landscape to do that scope of work. Mrs. Palmer states that a bench would be a safer idea because of ADA or issues with elderly. Mrs. Walder asked the trustees to look at the bench options before the next meeting.

COMMUNITY ROOM: BLUETOOTH: *Ms. Port made the motion to approve the installation of a Bluetooth wall-mounted plug & pair station in the Community Room, with related hardware, material, labor & shipping included, for a cost of $1,160.00 based on Estimate #859, dated September 1, 2025, from Just Add Tech, Inc., equipment approved by ADP. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

COMMUNITY ROOM: BLUETOOTH: AUTHORIZED SIGNATORY: *Mr. Hare made the motion to authorize Kristina Port to act as signatory for the Bluetooth wall-mounted plug & pair station in the Community Room for the Just Add Tech, Inc. estimate dated September 1, 2025. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed* *unanimously.*

COMMUNITY ROOM: TABLET & CABLES: Mrs. Palmer stated that the tablet is for employees and other boards to use during meetings to adjust the volume of the mics. Will not be available to the public to use.

Ms. Port made the motion to approve the employee & affiliate use of a Samsung S10 tablet for A/V settings & BoxCast controls in the Community Room, and the purchase of mini aux & ethernet A/V cables for use in the Community Room, for a cost of $740.00 based on Estimate #860, dated September 1, 2025, from Just Add Tech, Inc., equipment approved by ADP. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and the votes are as follows: Mr. Mueller yes; Mr. Hare no; Ms. Port yes; and the motion passed.

Mr. Mueller stepped away at 3:40 pm.

COMMUNITY ROOM: TABLET & CABLES: AUTHORIZED SIG: *Mr. Hare made the motion to authorize Kristina Port to act as signatory for the tablet & cables purchase in the Community Room from the Just Add Tech, Inc. estimate dated September 1, 2025. Ms. Port seconded the motion, and it passed.*

Mr. Mueller stepped back in at 3:42 pm.

SNOWPLOW PROPOSALS: The Township has received proposals from CJ Landscape and Exscape. Mrs. Palmer stated that Exscape's terms and conditions need to be approved by the APA. If the trustees want to go with CJ Landscape again then nothing needs to be done but if they decide to go with Exscape, we need to send the proposal to the APA for review. Exscape is significantly less. Trustees would like Exscape's proposal to be sent to APA and will continue this till the next meeting. Chief Swaidner pointed out that CJ Landscape is only accounting for 20 salting occurrences and anything after that will be billed at per occurrence, whereas Exscape's salting is for the whole season.

Mr. Mueller stated that he stopped at the house that is just west of the old Town Hall and the resident claims that at the corner of his lot, our parking lot drains in his direction and there is a sinkhole. Mr. Mueller asked Mr. Maltese to look at it and see if there is anything he can do. Mr. Hare stated that he spoke with the resident as well and Mr. Maltese did too. Mr. Maltese stated that he gave the resident ODOT's number because they would oversee the road and the resident was asking about a drain line and Mr. Maltese stated he can't verify that for him because it is personal property. Mr. Dietrich stated that Geauga Soil and Water might have some insight into the issue for the resident.

OTARMA: TASKS & SOATs: Mrs. Walder stated she sent this out a couple weeks ago to the Board as a follow up to the June 2nd visit and provided a list of recommendations and Statement Of Actions Taken that OTARMA requested to be completed and returned in the next 60 days. Stated that there were 13 recommendations and involves various departments. Mrs. Palmer stated that one and three have been completely handled by the new revision of the personnel policy manual. Mrs. Walder asks the Board to identify who will take care of the statement of action.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to move into executive session to discuss the employment & compensation of a public employee pursuant to ORC 121.22(G)(1) and ORC 121.22(G)(2) purchase of property for public purpose or sale of property at competitive bid. Ms. Port seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES REGULAR

Community Room October 2, 2025

The meeting moved into executive session at 3:51 pm.

Item #1: Melissa Palmer and Karen Walder
In at 3:51 pm; out at 4:10 pm

Item #1: Melissa Palmer and Karen Walder
In at 4:10 pm; out at 4:13 pm

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

The meeting was moved to regular session at 4:13 pm

#2 FIRE-EMS RECRUIT APPOINTMENT: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to appoint Ms. Samantha Rae Paskowski to the position of Fire-EMS Recruit, effective October 3, 2025. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

PURCHASE ORDERS AND BILLS WERE APPROVED AS ATTACHED.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 4:14 pm.

Kristina Port, Chair

Karen Walder, Fiscal Officer

Recorded by: J. Ezzone