

TOWN HALL

November 7, 2023

The Chair, Mr. Rambo, called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm. Trustees Kristina Port and Jim Mueller were present. Fiscal Officer Karen Walder and Board Administrator Melissa Palmer were present.

The following Department Heads were present: Asst. Fire Chief Nick Sambula, Road Superintendent Gene Layne, Zoning Inspector Shane Wrench, and Police Chief Tom Swaidner.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

**MINUTES:** *Mr. Mueller made the motion to accept the minutes of the Special Meeting held on October 12, 2023, as presented. Ms. Port seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously.*

*Mr. Mueller made the motion to accept the minutes of the Regular Meeting held on October 19, 2023, as presented. Ms. Port seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

*Ms. Port motion to accept the minutes of the Special Meeting held on October 27, 2023, as presented. Mr. Rambo seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

**ZONING DEPT:** Mr. Wrench stated that this month's BZA meeting will have 4 cases. Dave Dietrich and Steve Gokorsch met with the Zoning Commission to go over some of the last details of the revised Zoning Resolution and got about halfway through and will finish at November's Zoning Commission meeting.

**CHAGRIN HTS PARCEL DEVELOPMENT: LESLIE SCHROEDER:** Ms. Schroeder came in to discuss the development of property on Blackford Drive. Ms. Schroeder expressed concerns regarding drainage issues once the homes are built. Lisa from Geauga Soil and Water came out and recommended putting in a swale but Ms. Schroeder fears it would create flooding for her neighbor. Geauga Soil and Water suggested getting a bigger pipe under the road and a different grate that is less likely to clog. Mr. Rambo stated that if the Trustees could get a copy of the report from Geauga Soil and Water, they would forward it to Road Superintendent Gene Layne to review so he can look into what can be done to help.

Another concern Ms. Schroeder addressed was regarding a 20-year assessment for sewer tap in that she was paying for. Ms. Schroeder feels that the 6 lots on Blackford should pay for the sewer assessment since they will be tapping in. She called Nick Gorris regarding this and stated that he investigated what everyone paid and that he needed to find the original language of the assessment, but it was in archives. Ms. Schroeder wanted to know if there was anything the Trustees could do or suggest somewhere else to call. Mr. Rambo suggested calling the Geauga Public Health Department and maybe the Recorder's Office. There was nothing the Township could do regarding this matter. Mr. Wrench noted that someone did call about the sewer tap in and he directed them to call the County Water Dept.

**COMMUNITY BUILDING UPDATE:** Mr. Rambo stated that we must hire a 3<sup>rd</sup> party inspector to be onsite when necessary and stated that it is in the contract. There is a list of items the inspector will need to be onsite to inspect and approve. Mr. Rambo stated that the plans are almost complete.

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**ENGINEERING FUNDS:** Mr. Rambo stated that there was an additional engineering cost because we asked for additional services to include upgrading the water well, a new generator and adding snow melt to the sidewalks. The additional cost from the engineer is \$3,550.

Mrs. Walder asked who we would be paying for these additional services and Mr. Rambo stated that we would pay Strollo. Mrs. Walder stated that we currently have an open PO with Strollo that accounts for design fee of a fixed fee of \$32,000 and a \$3,500, not to exceed, for reimbursable expenses. Mrs. Walder asked if this expense is over and above and Mr. Rambo said yes because it was additional services they requested. Mrs. Walder stated that the line item we would normally encumber those funds, we only have \$2,342 and would need to move in about \$1,200 from somewhere else and thinks we can probably do it. Mrs. Walder asked if there were additional fees to let her know and Mr. Rambo said he is trying to get more information regarding the inspector.

*Mr. Mueller made the motion to authorize Strollo Architects to approve additional engineering tasks based on an increased scope identified in an email from David Roose, dated November 2, 2023, for an amount not to exceed \$3,550.00. Ms. Port seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

**FACILITIES:** Mr. Wrench mentioned that yesterday the NOPEC funded heating/cooling zoning at the Administration Building was completed. Mr. Wrench stated that Portman Electric was out earlier this afternoon and installed the new generator at Town Hall. Stated they checked on the surge protector and was a \$500 option and will look into it. Mr. Wrench stated that it's about 3-4 weeks out still for getting the locust tree cut down at the Town Hall.

**ROAD DEPT:** Mr. Layne stated they had their first snow event and went off without a hitch. Mr. Layne gave special thanks to his mechanic, Nick Lanzaretta, for getting the trucks prepared for the season.

**POLICE DEPT:** Chief Swaidner stated that his department was awarded the AAA Platinum Award for community traffic safety. The achievement is for outstanding service in areas that improve the quality of life through traffic safety programs. Chief Swaidner thanked everyone from his department for working hard to make it possible.

Chief Swaidner stated that their radio project is now complete. The radios have been outfitted in the cars and are now in service.

**FIRE DEPT: MAGNEGRIP:** *Mr. Mueller made the motion to accept the proposal for the MagneGrip Exhaust Removal System, from MagneGrip, of Cincinnati, Ohio, for a cost of \$15,523.00, dated September 21, 2023. Ms. Port seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

**AUTHORIZED SIGNATORY: MAGNEGRIP:** *Mr. Mueller made the motion to authorize Matthew Rambo to sign the MagneGrip Exhaust Removal Systems Proposal for the MagneGrip Exhaust System 6 new hose drops, truck connections, and installation. Ms. Port seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

**ACCEPT DONATION:** *Mr. Mueller made the motion to accept the donation of \$400.00 cash from Mrs. Visconsi, of Hillbrook Drive, to the Fire Department. Ms. Port seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

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*Ms. Port made the motion to approve the use of the \$400.00 for the Fire Department at the discretion of the Fire Chief. Mr. Mueller made the motion and it passed unanimously.*

**RESOLUTION 2023-21 RESCIND CAPITAL PROJECT FUND:** Mrs. Walder stated that the Resolution reflects the process as it was recommended by the Council and the Auditor of State. Further, she recommended to the Board that a new Reserve Fund be established as soon as possible following the year end close.

*Ms. Port made the motion to approve Resolution 2023-21: a resolution rescinding Capital Project Fund 4904 for the purpose of using the funds for the new Community Building. Mr. Rambo seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

**SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION #7: RESOLUTION 2023-22:** Mrs. Walder stated that the bulk of it is to appropriate the transfer of the reserve funds. There was also \$11,500 added to the Fire District; \$1,500 for the anticipated grant match for the AFG Grant and the other \$10,000 was for salary to take us to the end of the year. An additional \$7,500 was added to the General Fund.

*Ms. Port made the motion to adopt the Supplemental Township Annual Appropriation #7, Resolution 2023-22, to provide for the current expenses and other expenditures of the Board of Trustees, for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2023, as recommended by the Fiscal Officer. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

**REDUCE COLLECTION:** Trustees Rambo and Port recapped the meeting they attended yesterday and thanked the Budget Commission for the presentation. Mr. Rambo noted that past revaluations resulted in an average 10% increase in inside millage. This time, the increase is near 30%. Based on those figures, he felt that a reduction of 90% of the unvoted increase should be considered. Ms. Port noted that the Township has 5 eligible Levies and proposed a reduction of \$245,000 for 1 year for the Road & Bridge levy. Trustee Mueller expressed skepticism and noted discussions about potential Fire and Police Dept levies. Mr. Rambo noted the difference is that this is unvoted inside millage tax money, versus Levy tax money, which is voted on by the taxpayer. Mr. Rambo also noted that the County Commissioners have already acted to reduce collections on their portion of the inside millage revenue windfall. He referred residents to the tax reappraisal estimator on the County Auditor's website.

Road Superintendent Gene Layne expressed concern about a levy reduction, preferring to accept the additional funds for road paving, however Ms. Port reiterated that the Board's action would be for one year only and the intention would be to replace the Road and Bridge funds entirely from the General Fund. Mrs. Palmer noted that the proposed reduction of a Road levy was in no way a negative reflection of the Road Superintendent or the operation of the Department.

*Mr. Rambo made the motion to authorize Fiscal Officer Karen Walder to prepare a resolution to reduce collection of a Road & Bridge levy by \$245,000 to offset the impact of the unvoted increase in inside millage due to revaluation. Ms. Port seconded the motion, and the votes are as follows: Mr. Mueller no; Ms. Port yes; Mr. Rambo yes and the motion passed.*

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**FO QUARTERLY REPORT:** Mrs. Walder noted that our investment earnings are \$61,000 over budget to date. Cemetery lot sales and zoning fees are \$5,000 under budget. Ambulance billing is about \$15,000 over budget.

*Mr. Mueller made the motion to acknowledge receipt of the third quarter 2023 report from the Russell Township Fiscal Officer. Ms. Port seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

**NEW RESERVE FUND PROPOSAL:** Mrs. Walder stated that Chief Swaidner brought to her the concern that there are currently 3 police officers with over 20 years of service, as well as 4 Road Department employees with 20 or more years of service. Also, each department would have 3-4 additional employees that would hit 20 years in the next 5 years. Upon retirement, these employees would be eligible for a significant payout, such as vacation and sick time. Based on current rates of pay, it could be between \$18,000 and \$25,000 per employee and would cause a significant impact on the department's finances. Mrs. Walder stated in the ORC regarding the reserve funds, there is a section that allows the establishment of a reserve fund for purpose of accumulating resource for the payment of accumulated sick leave, vacation leave, payments in lieu of taking compensatory time off. Mrs. Walder would like to pursue this further and seek approval from the Board to establish those reserve funds for the Police and Road Departments. Mrs. Walder said the fund amount would be based upon the resolution. The Trustees agree for Mrs. Walder to explore setting up these funds.

**WAYPOINT/OSWALD BENEFIT AGENT:** Mrs. Walder stated that the Township has been with Waypoint for several years and they have undergone some changes and as a result we have been looking at alternatives and would like request of approval to name Oswald Companies as our benefits agent, as we feel they present the best fit for the Township. Mrs. Walder stated that it would have no effect on the rates that are currently in place.

*Ms. Port made the motion to authorize Fiscal Officer Karen Walder to act as authorized signatory for Russell Township for documents related to changing the Township Benefits Agent from Waypoint to Oswald Companies, effective January 1, 2024. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

Mrs. Walder stated that she just received the renewal for our dental coverage for next year and they are holding the rates the same as this year and offering a 2-year rate lock.

**BANK RECONCILIATION & FINANCIAL REPORTS:** *Ms. Port made the motion to acknowledge receipt of the monthly bank reconciliation and financial reports for September 2023, as submitted by Fiscal Officer Karen Walder. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

#### **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC RECEIVED**

**OTA TOWNSHIP EDUCATION SUBSCRIPTION:** *Mr. Mueller made the motion to authorize the purchase of an annual OTA Township Education Subscription for use by township active and affiliate members of the Ohio Township Association for unlimited webinars and webinar archive access in 2024 for the cost of \$250.00. Ms. Port seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

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**2024: SOLICIT LETTERS OF INTEREST/REAPPOINTMENT FOR ZONING**

**BOARDS:** Mr. Rambo stated he will contact Mr. Stormann with the Zoning Commission and Mr. McGrievy with the Board of Zoning Appeals to see if they are interested in reappointment.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** *Ms. Port 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). Mr. Rambo seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

The meeting moved into executive session at 4:20 pm.

*Mr. Mueller made the motion to return to regular session. Ms. Port seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

The meeting moved into regular session at 4:27 pm.

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

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

The meeting was adjourned at 4:27 pm.

Matthew Rambo, Chair

Karen Walder, Fiscal Officer

Recorded by: J. Ezzone