

TOWN HALL

November 7, 2024

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m. by Chairperson Port. Trustees Rambo and Mueller were present. The Board Administrator Melissa Palmer and Fiscal Officer Karen Walder were present.

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

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

MINUTES: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to accept the minutes of the Special Meeting held on October 18, 2024, as presented. Mr. Rambo seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

Mr. Rambo made the motion to accept the minutes of the Special Meeting held on October 25, 2024, as presented. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

JOB ABANDONMENT POLICY: FIRE DEPT: Asst. Fire Chief Sambula stated that they received the policy back from Clemans Nelson on how to clean up the payroll roster. Stated that he is satisfied with the policy. Stated that it currently fits the situation now and gives the employees notice of reengaging. Clemans Nelson will help write up the letter that will be sent to the employees for reengaging. The employee will have 30 days to respond in writing. If they do not reengage, we don't have to wait a year to take them off the roster.

Mr. Rambo made the motion to authorize the amendment of the Russell Township Personnel Policy Manual to include the Job Abandonment Policy for the Fire Department, as presented by Clemans-Nelson. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING, REEMPLOYED RETIRANT: *Mr. Rambo made the motion to open the public hearing on the proposed re-employment by Russell Township of Laura Frazier to the position of part-time Firefighter/Paramedic with the Russell Township Fire Department. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

The Public Hearing opened at: 2:07 pm.

Mr. Mueller made the motion to close the public hearing on the proposed re-employment of Laura Frazier to the position of part-time Firefighter/Paramedic. Mr. Rambo seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

The Public Hearing closed at: 2:08 pm.

STRATEGIC PLANNING STUDY: Asst. Fire Chief Sambula stated he had copies of the final results from the first 2 sessions. He is really pleased with the process and how the results came out. Stated he heard from Chief Cook, who is facilitating the study, that January 18th and March 1st will be the dates for the next 2 sessions. Stated he has drafted invites that will be sent out. Just waiting on confirmation from ASM to use their facilities. Asst. Fire Chief Sambula stated that the sessions are a commitment of a full 8-hour day.

POLICE DEPT: CRUISER GARAGE: Chief Swaidner stated that he spoke with Soil and Water and got clearance to where the building is going and got an

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exemption. Received a Zoning Permit and also got the Building Permit through the county. The next step is to contract through Pole Barns Direct. Stated that he sent the contract to the APA and is waiting to hear back. If there are any changes, the contract will be sent to Pole Barns Direct to review and update. Once the contract is signed, there will be about a 4-week lead time. Pole Barns Direct does the barn in 3 phases. 1st phase is building the building. 2nd phase is pouring the concrete and depending on the weather, this phase may not happen until spring. 3rd phase will be interior finishes.

Mr. Mueller made the motion to accept the proposal dated November 5, 2024, for Phase I material and labor for the Police Department Cruiser Garage, from Pole Barns Direct Inc., for the amount of \$33,419.27: \$16,709.64 due at material delivery and \$16,709.63 due at completion, pending approval of the Geauga County Prosecutor. Ms. Port seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

POLE BARNs DIRECT: AUTHORIZED SIGNATORY: *Mr. Rambo made the motion to authorize Kristina Port to act as signatory for the Pole Barns Direct Inc., agreement for the Cruiser Garage project, phase 1 agreement dated November 5, 2024. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

POLICE DEPT UPDATE: Chief Swaidner stated that they completed drug take back and collected over 100 pounds of prescription drugs. The annual Cram the Cruiser food drive is going on till November 12th and people can drop off any nonperishable food items. Will start the Holiday Toy Drive on November 13th.

SNOW & ICE CONTROL: COUNTY ROADS: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to approve the agreement entitled "Snow and Ice Control Agreement among Geauga County Board of Commissioners, Geauga County Engineer and Russell Township Board of Trustees" for the 2024-2025 winter season, approved as to form by the Geauga County Prosecutor's Office. Mr. Rambo seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

ROAD: DISPOSITION OF PROPERTY: *Mr. Mueller made the motion, at the recommendation of the Road Superintendent, to dispose of the wood identified in an email entitled "Agenda items for 11/7 meeting" and further identified in photos in the email entitled "wood pictures," both emails to Melissa Palmer dated November 6, 2024, as the wood is not needed for public use, is obsolete, or is unfit for public use. Mr. Rambo seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

HOLIDAY LIGHTING & DECORATIONS: Mr. Layne stated they have been putting up the deer for the last several years and they are starting to fail and lights are burning out and have had to replace a few times. Asked what the Trustees want to do. Trustees suggest getting someone professional to put up lights and asked Mr. Wrench to look into getting some quotes. Also suggested seeing if they could fix the deer too.

ZONING DEPT: Mr. Wrench stated that 3 new houses have been started and some miscellaneous decks and sheds as well. Stated that the new Zoning Secretary, Bonnie, started last Friday and just finished her first week this week. She will be working Monday – Wednesday.

Ms. Port asked Mr. Wrench how the conference was he attended in Columbus. Mr. Wrench stated it was informative and focused on agricultural issues. Received a lot of handout material and references. Stated that the instructor has offered free legal advice for any questions on agricultural issues in our area.

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SNOWPLOW AGREEMENT: Mr. Wrench stated that he sent out pricing on 2 contractors. The one contract he sent to the APA and sent it back to the contractor but never heard back regarding the changes. Recommends continuing with CJ Landscape.

Mr. Mueller made the motion to accept the proposals dated October 15, 2024, for snowplowing services by CJ Landscape LLC on a seasonal contract basis at the Russell Township Administration \$2,850.00, Fire Department \$3,725.00, Recycling Center \$2,370.00, and Police Department \$2,030.00 lots for the 2024/2025 season with 24-hour service. Mr. Rambo seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

SNOWPLOW: AUTHORIZED SIGNATORY: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to accept the proposal from CJ Landscape LLC and authorize Kristina Port to act as authorized signatory for the CJ Landscape LLC agreement dated October 15, 2024. Mr. Rambo seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

RECYCLING CENTER UPDATE: Mr. Wrench stated that TRC was out Tuesday and got the trenching in across the Recycling Center parking lot and everything is wired, and conduit is in. Stated that Mr. Layne is going to asphalt the trench. Stated that TRC is supposed to be back early next week to put the swing gate up.

FISCAL OFFICE: Mrs. Walder stated that Russell Township precinct A had the highest voter turnout in the county at 86.53%. All of the Russell precincts were over 81.5% turnout. Geauga County ranked 4th in voter turnout at 79.44%. Mrs. Walder stated that one of the best practices that she’s been hearing is that Board of Trustees should have access to bank statements directly from the bank, and asked the Trustees if that’s something they would use. The Trustees recommended that whoever is the Chair to have access. Will start this process in 2025.

Mrs. Walder stated that she received the loan amortization schedule for the OPWC loan and it’s a 15-year loan at 0% interest with payments starting January 2025 and continuing through July 2039.

Ms. Dorka stated that on December 3rd at 1:00 pm, our Oswald representative will be at the Administration Building for open enrollment and encourages anyone that needs open enrollment to come in and sign up.

FO QUARTERLY REPORT: Mrs. Walder stated that revenue and expenditures have been inline to expectations. Mrs. Walder noted that cemetery revenues are currently over 2x last year. Stated the highest recycling volume was highest in July and August.

Mr. Rambo made the motion to acknowledge receipt of the third quarter 2024 report from the Russell Township Fiscal Officer. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION: *Mr. Rambo made the motion to adopt the Supplemental Township Annual Appropriation Resolution 2024-32 to provide for the additional sums (SUPPL #9 \$104,133.33) to be set aside and appropriated in*

<i>FUND 1000</i>	<i>\$5,300.00</i>
<i>FUND 2031</i>	<i>\$8,333.33</i>
<i>FUND 2081</i>	<i>\$3,000.00</i>
<i>FUND 2111</i>	<i>\$5,000.00</i>
<i>FUND 2908</i>	<i>\$82,500.00</i>

for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2024, as recommended by the

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Fiscal Officer. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION: REDUCE COLLECTION OF FIRE LEVY: *Mr. Rambo made the motion to approve Resolution 2024-33: a resolution to reduce collection of Russell Township's 2016 1.75 mill Fire Levy to 1.26 mill for collection year 2025 only, with the intent to repay the funds reduced by this resolution to the Fire Department from the General Fund. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

NOPEC FUNDS UPDATE: Ms. Dorka stated that there is \$3,142.96 still available if anyone has any energy savings projects.

BWC 2025 SAFETY CONFERENCE: Mrs. Walder stated that the 2025 Safety Congress Conference is coming up in April and while the fiscal office has attended for the past several years, she encourages other departments to consider sending someone to attend.

CONFERENCE TAKE AWAYS: Mrs. Walder stated that her staff attended the OAPT Fall Conference, and she attended the 1-day CPIM Conference and there was some common topics from both: cybercrime and fraud were big topics. Stated 95% of data breach still start with phishing attack and recommends conducting regular phishing tests and an annual risk assessment. 2nd big topic was AI and how it used and potential benefits, such as analyzing data. 3rd topic was solar power and funding for solar panels.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC WERE RECEIVED

DISPOSITION OF PROPERTY: ADMIN: *Mr. Mueller made the motion, at the recommendation of Fiscal Officer Karen Walder, to dispose of township property presented in the document titled "F.O. Disposal List," as the item is not needed for public use, is obsolete, or is unfit for public use. Mr. Rambo seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

2025 CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE: Ms. Port stated that the OTA Winter Conference is the end of January and said if anyone is interested in attending to sign up for it. Stated that they offer a lot of good sessions. Mr. Rambo recommended that Mr. Wrench attend the conference and Mr. Wrench agreed to go. Ms. Port stated if anyone else is interested to let them know.

Mr. Rambo made the motion to approve reasonable and necessary expenses for Kristina Port and Shane Wrench to attend the OTA Winter Conference, January 29-31, 2025, in Columbus, OH. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

HyFi WATER LEVEL SENSOR AGREEMENT RENEWAL: Trustees asked Asst. Fire Chief Sambula if Chief Frazier wants to renew. He believes Chief Frazier would want to but will have to check with him. Mrs. Palmer will forward the agreement to the Fire Department once it comes in.

REPLACEMENT OF A TRUSTEE: Trustees discussed the process and timeline of when they would have to appoint a new Trustee. Ms. Port and Mr. Mueller agreed that they will each come up with a list of candidates and will send them to Mrs. Palmer.

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COMMUNITY ROOM: WORK SESSION: Asked Mrs. Ezzone to get some pricing on rugs; one by front door, one by each side door and a runner by the sink area. Ms. Port does not want rugs in front of the bathrooms due to tripping hazard for the elderly. Trustees asked Mr. Wrench to get quotes for adding signage to the Administration sign board. Mrs. Walder asked the Trustees if they wanted any window treatments, but no decision was made.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: *Mr. Mueller 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 3:30 pm.

Item #1: Asst. Fire Chief Nick Sambula, Melissa Palmer, Karen Walder, Jessica Ezzone, and Jennifer Dorka

In at 3:31pm; out at 3:33 pm

Item #2: Melissa Palmer, Karen Walder, Jessica Ezzone, and Jennifer Dorka

In at 3:33pm; out at 3:34 pm

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

The meeting moved to regular session at 3:34 pm.

FIRE-EMS RECRUIT APPOINTMENT: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to appoint Mr. Vito Carcioppolo to the position of Fire-EMS Recruit, effective November 8, 2024. Mr. Rambo seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

PURCHASE ORDERS AND BILLS WERE APPROVED AS ATTACHED.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 3:35 pm.

Kristina Port, Chair

Karen Walder, Fiscal Officer

Recorded by: J. Ezzone