

Community Room

December 18,

2025

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by chairperson Port. Trustee Mueller and Hare were present. The Board Administrator Melissa Palmer and Fiscal Officer Karen Walder were present.

The following Department Head was present: Police Chief Tom Swaidner. 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 November 20, 2025, as presented. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

MINUTES: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to accept the minutes from the Russell Township Fire Department's Special Presentation of the Strategic Plan 2025-2030 held on December 2, 2025, as presented. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

MINUTES: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to accept the minutes of the Special Meeting held on December 2, 2025, as presented. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

CONTRACT SIGNATURE: FIRE DORMITORY: Asst. Fire Chief Sambula stated there has been a lot of back and forth with the contract and the APA has stamped for approval and was then sent to the contractor to read over and was returned. Stated that the contractor was going to give a \$10,000 discount if they could start working by January 1st, but with the holidays and how close it is getting the contracted executed, they have requested to start January 10th and will still honor the \$10,000 discount. Stated that the contract has been amended to reflect that change. Asst. Fire Chief Sambula stated that they are starting to make some preparations at the Fire Station and moving things around.

Mr. Hare made the motion to execute the agreement with United Contractors, Inc from Brookfield, Ohio, for the amount of \$141,800.00, with an option of an early start date reduction of \$10,000.00, as recommended by the James Ptacek of Larsen Architects. for the project entitled Russell Township Fire Dormitory & Locker Room Renovation, as recommended by James Ptacek of Larsen Architects. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

NOTICE TO PROCEED: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to approve the Notice to Proceed with United Contractors, Inc from Brookfield, Ohio, effective December 19, 2025 to obtain the early start date reduction of \$10,000.00, for the project entitled Russell Township Fire Dormitory & Locker Room Renovation. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

AUTHORIZED SIGNATORY: FIRE DORMITORY: *Ms. Port made the motion to authorize Christopher Hare to be the signatory on behalf of the Board of Trustees for contract documents and the agreement with United Contractors, Inc from Brookfield, Ohio, for the project entitled Russell Township Fire Dormitory & Locker Room Renovation. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

FIRE DEPT: Asst. Fire Chief Sambula stated that they will be hosting a blood drive on Saturday, January 17th from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm.

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Asst. Fire Chief Sambula stated they were called to help assist in Hunting Valley for a male that was stuck in a trench that had collapsed on him. Thanks to the efforts of the members that responded, including Chagrin Valley Fire Department and EastTech Technical Rescue Team, they were successfully able to extract the guy from the trench. Asst. Fire Chief Sambula highlighted the importance of continuing the working relationship Chagrin Valley Fire Department

FUEL MANAGEMENT CONSULTING: Mrs. Palmer stated since the fuel pumps haven't been updated yet, that Mr. Maltese is going to continue with the current vendor on a month-to-month basis for \$162.00 per month for up to six months and we may cancel in writing.

Mr. Mueller made the motion that Proposal #1 for monthly management service for the Petro-Vend K-800 by Fuel Management Consulting, L.L.C., from Painesville, Ohio, be approved for the amount of \$162.00 per month, document dated December 17, 2025, effective January 1, 2026, through June 30, 2026. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

OPWC GRANT APPLICATION: RESOLUTION 2025-35: CERTIFYING

REPRESENTATIVE: Ms. Port stated that Mr. Maltese, Mrs. Walder, Mrs. Palmer and herself attended a meeting at the Engineer's Office. Stated that they talked about the different roads, but in the discussion was revisiting the landslide at Hillbrook. The county applied for an OPWC grant, but they need a resolution to go forward with the application for the grant. Mrs. Walder stated that the total estimated project cost is about \$750,000 and the application for the OPWC grant is \$675,000. The township would incur a \$75,000 loan. The project schedule would anticipate the approval mid next year with the actual work being done in 2027.

Ms. Port made the motion to approve Resolution 2025-35, a resolution authorizing Kristina Port to serve as the Chief Executive Officer and Certifying Representative to submit an application to participate in the Ohio Public Works Commission (OPWC) State Capital Improvement Program and/or Local Transportation Improvement Program(s) and to execute financial assistance applications and contracts as required. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and the votes are as follows: Mr. Mueller yes; Mr. Hare abstained; Ms. Port yes and the motion passed.

FISCAL OFFICE: Mrs. Walder noted that this is Trustee Mueller's last meeting of year and last meeting of his term. Mrs. Walder provided Mr. Mueller with a gift and wished him well.

Mrs. Walder asked if anyone watched a webinar on December 10th regarding House Bill 96, especially the audit requirements. Mrs. Walder stated that she will forward handout materials. Ms. Port stated that she did watch it and appreciated Mrs. Walder circulating the notes from the webinar to the department heads and trustees.

BANK RECONCILIATION & FINANCIAL REPORTS: *Mr. Hare made the motion to acknowledge receipt of the monthly bank reconciliation and financial reports for November 2025, as submitted by Fiscal Officer Karen Walder. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC WERE RECEIVED

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POLICY MANUAL: Ms. Port stated that she had her questions addressed and had no further comments with the revisions. Mrs. Palmer stated that she has some changes that she identified with comments recently made by Clemens Nelson that were not requested and will speak with them about it. Will revisit this topic in January. Mrs. Palmer stated that the section regarding flex time needs to be decided on because it was added back in. Mrs. Palmer stated she will send the trustees a list of the remaining issues. Mrs. Palmer suggests having a work session in January.

Mrs. Walder stated that she was interested in the flex time for her staff and would ask for language to allow in excess of regularly scheduled hours, for example, if an employee wanted to work four ten-hour days. Ms. Port wants to ensure that with the capacity of employees, someone is physically in the office during business hours.

GREEN VISION AGREEMENT: Mrs. Walder stated that there is a meeting scheduled Monday with the vendor to discuss the process and coordinate how they are getting the last vehicle out. Mrs. Walder stated that once Mr. Kolk has the opportunity to look at the vehicle, there may be an additional resolution for removal of that vehicle.

Mrs. Walder stated that the contract is ready to go. It is signed by the vendor and stamped by the APA.

Mr. Hare made the motion to approve the contract with Green Vision Materials Inc, emailed to the trustees by Karen Walder on December 8, 2025, for the demolition project at 8460 Ridgewood Lane for a cost of \$21,400.00. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

2026 TRUSTEE MEETING SCHEDULE: There was brief discussion on the 2026 meeting schedule. The only change was moving the first meeting of the month from 2:00 pm to 2:30 pm.

Mr. Mueller made the motion to approve the Trustee 2026 regular meeting schedule as amended. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

CEMETERY POLICY EXCEPTION: HOLLERAN: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to authorize a non-precedent setting exception to the cemetery stone policy to allow Thomas & Harriet Holleran of the Holleran family to install pillow top, raised, slant stones at each grave of the Holleran family plot because they are also putting in a bench as a family marker in lieu of a large family monument. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

COMMUNITY ROOM: GOV, CIVIC, CHARITABLE: RENTAL POLICY: Mr. Hare stated that after feedback from the community and the board, a policy has been created for local supporting agencies. There will be no rental fee for these organizations but a \$25 fee for additional use in the same month and will also have to submit a hold harmless agreement. It states in the policy that township business would take precedence over these organizations.

Mr. Mueller made the motion to approve the Government, Civic, & Charitable Group: Facility Event Rental Policy, as prepared by Christopher Hare and emailed on December 17, 2025, and amended on December 18, 2025, for use with Russell Township owned properties. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

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MR. HARE UPDATES: Mr. Hare thanked Mrs. Walder for sending out the opioid usage information.

Mr. Hare stated that as he did his rounds of catching up on phone calls, Mr. Kolk is following up on everybody and everyone around town is praising him for his thorough follow-ups and thanked him for his hard work.

RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION: JACK GARNER: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to adopt Resolution 2025-36: A Resolution of Appreciation for Jack Garner upon his retirement from 31 years with the Russell Township Road Department. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

MR. MUELLER UPDATE: Mr. Mueller stated that he received a call from Mr. Spectorsky regarding the property on the northwest corner of 306 and Music Street. Mr. Mueller stated that reports were done regarding contamination several years ago. States that Mr. Spectorsky got reports showing there's no contamination and sent those reports to the county in July. Mrs. Palmer stated that the trustees received a copy of those reports and recently just resent them to the trustees. Mr. Mueller stated the report now shows no contamination. Mr. Mueller said there is a letter from Ports Petroleum who did the work. Stated there is an incident number and need to contact BUSTR in Columbus and see if they issued a "no further action" statement. Mr. Mueller would like for someone to call and find out about the "no further action."

MS. PORT UPDATES: Ms. Port asked Mr. Kolk about holiday lighting and Mr. Kolk stated that the electrical boxes aren't working and need to get someone out to look at them. Mr. Kolk stated that he noticed that the flagpole lights aren't working as well.

Ms. Port asked about the flagpole. Mr. Kolk stated that this time of year is hard to get a lift out. There was discussion about taking the flag down completely until the pole is fixed or just leaving it.

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

The meeting moved into executive session at 8:04 pm.

Item #1: Melissa Palmer

In at 8:09pm; out at 8:12 pm

Item #2: Melissa Palmer

In at 8:12 pm; out at 8:16 pm

Item #3: Melissa Palmer, Frank Kolk

In at 8:16 pm; out at 8:28 pm

Item #4: Melissa Palmer

In at 8:28 pm; out at 8:34 pm

Item #5: Melissa Palmer, Police Chief Tom Swaidner

In at 8:34 pm; out at 8:46 pm

Item #6: Melissa Palmer,

In at 8:46 pm; out at 8:47 pm

Item #7-10: Melissa Palmer, Asst. Fire Chief Nick Sambula

In at 8:47 pm; out at 9:04 pm

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

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The meeting was moved to regular session at 9:05 pm.

#1 DAVE DIETRICH: RESCIND CONSULTING AGREEMENT: *Mr. Hare made the motion to rescind the proposal previously approved at the December 2, 2025 Trustee meeting for David Dietrich to provide assistance to Russell Township & Zoning Department staff Frank Kolk and Bonnie Guyer. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

#2 DAVE DIETRICH: RESIGNATION: *Mr. Hare made the motion to accept the resignation of David C Dietrich from the position of Russell Township Zoning Inspector effective December 31, 2025. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

#4 ZONING INSPECTOR: PROMOTION: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to promote from within, employee Frank Kolk, as the part-time Russell Township Zoning Inspector, at the rate of \$29.00; a one-year probation will begin on the official starting date of January 1, 2026. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

#5 DETECTIVE APPOINTMENT: LaMONICA: *Mr. Hare made the motion, based on the recommendation of Police Chief Thomas Swaidner, to promote Adam LaMonica to the level of Detective within the Russell Township Police Department. As Detective, Adam LaMonica continues as a full-time police officer and constable with the Russell Township Police Department. The conditions of employment are as follows: The promotion start date is January 1, 2026. A one-year probation period will begin on the promotion start date. Pay scale will be at the Detective level per Salary Schedule 44. Equipment continues to be provided by the Russell Police Department as required pursuant to the agreement between Russell Township and the Ohio Patrolmen's Benevolent Association. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

#6 SALARY SCHEDULE: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to adopt Salary Schedule 44, content approved December 18, 2025, and effective January 1, 2026. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

#7 FIRE DEPARTMENT: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to approve the promotion of Mr. Jacob Ebright from part-time Firefighter/Paramedic to part-time Lieutenant, with pay & Officer-In-Charge Lt adder per Salary Schedule 44, effective January 1, 2026, with a one-year probationary period commencing on the starting date. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

#8 FIRE DEPARTMENT: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to approve the promotion of Mr. Frank Gromowsky from part-time Firefighter/Paramedic to part-time Lieutenant, with pay & Officer-In-Charge Lt adder per Salary Schedule 44, effective January 1, 2026, with a one-year probationary period commencing on the starting date. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

#9 FIRE DEPARTMENT: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to approve the promotion of Mr. Jason Grassi from part-time Firefighter/Paramedic to part-time Lieutenant, with pay & Officer-In-Charge Lt adder per Salary Schedule 44, effective January 1, 2026, with a one-year probationary period commencing on the starting date. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

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#10 FIRE DEPARTMENT: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to approve the promotion of Mr. William Thomas from part-time Firefighter/EMT to part-time Lieutenant, with pay & Officer-In-Charge Lt adder per Salary Schedule 44, effective January 1, 2026, with a one-year probationary period commencing on the starting date. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

PURCHASE ORDERS AND BILLS WERE APPROVED AS ATTACHED.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 9:13 pm.

Kristina Port, Chair

Karen Walder, Fiscal Officer

Recorded by: J. Ezzone