

Community Room

December 2, 2025

The meeting was called to order at 5:35 p.m. by chairperson Port. Trustee Mueller and Trustee Hare 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 Giovanni Maltese, Fire Chief John Frazier and Zoning Inspector Dave Dietrich were present. Asst. Fire Chief Nick Sambula, Asst. Zoning Inspector Frank Kolk and Zoning Secretary Bonnie Guyer were present.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

MINUTES: *Mr. Hare made the motion to accept the minutes of the Special Meeting held on November 12, 2025, as presented. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

FACILITIES: HOLIDAY DECORATIONS: Ms. Port welcomed Mr. Kolk to his new role as facilities coordinator and asked Mr. Kolk if he could look into getting some holiday decorations up. Look at getting the deer put up and if need to contact a landscaper to relight them. Trustees authorized Mr. Kolk to spend up to \$1,000 for holiday lighting.

Ms. Port made the motion to authorize the placement of holiday decorations & lighting at the township center for an amount up to \$1,000.00. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

ZONING DEPT: Mr. Kolk stated that they have issued four permits for November, three were for new construction in Chagrin Heights and they also issued two letters for violations.

Mr. Hare asked about the email that was going back and forth with Geauga Soil and Water regarding complaints from residents about a lot of runoff and a pond filling with sediment. Mr. Dietrich stated that they did talk to the resident and satisfied his concerns. Mr. Dietrich stated he talked with Ms. Shale from Geauga Soil and Water and stated that her staff would keep an eye on it and there's a plan in place for control of the storm water, as well as erosion.

Mr. Dietrich stated today issued three more follow-up violation letters and stated they will probably be talking with legal counsel on these matters because they are lingering. Stated that Mr. Kolk is investigating on a daily basis.

Ms. Port stated that she attended the Stormwater workshop for Geauga Soil and Water. Stated she received a list of outfalls for the township. Ms. Port discussed how county engineer's office was trying to use GIS and iWorQ and suggested that the Zoning Department reach out to iWorQ about getting another layer added to help identify the outfalls.

FIRE DEPT: UNITED CONTRACTORS UPDATE: Asst. Fire Chief Sambula stated he's been working with Mrs. Walder, JP from Larsen Architects and the APA to finalize language for the contract to go out to United Contractors. Stated had a conversation today with a representative from United Contractors and Mrs. Walder and gave an update on where things were. Plan is to execute the contract at the next meeting. Asst. Fire Chief Sambula said in a conversation with JP, he requested that the trustees authorize him to start filing for permits through the county because it will take about 10-15 days for permitting. The trustees are ok with JP filing for the permits.

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FIRE: DONATION: *Mr. Hare made the motion to accept a cash donation from Kristina Port in the amount of \$100.00 to the Fire Department. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

Mr. Hare made the motion to approve the use of the \$100.00 cash donation for the Fire Department at the discretion of the Fire Chief. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

FIRE: DONATION: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to accept a Giant Eagle gift card donation from Christopher Hare in the amount of \$50.00 to the Fire Department. Ms. Port seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

Mr. Mueller made the motion to approve the use of the \$50.00 gift card donation for the Fire Department at the discretion of the Fire Chief. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

POLICE DEPT: Chief Swaidner stated that the Toy Drive is still going on till December 11th. Taking new unwrapped toys and will be taken to Geauga County Job and Family Services.

POLICE: DONATION: *Mr. Hare made the motion to accept a cash donation from Kristina Port in the amount of \$100.00 to the Police Department. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

Mr. Hare made the motion to approve the use of the \$100.00 cash donation for the Police Department at the discretion of the Police Chief. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

POLICE: DONATION: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to accept a Giant Eagle gift card donation from Christopher Hare in the amount of \$50.00 to the Police Department. Ms. Port seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

Mr. Mueller made the motion to approve the use of the \$50.00 gift card donation for the Police Department at the discretion of the Police Chief. Ms. Port seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

ROAD: DONATION: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to accept a cash donation from Kristina Port in the amount of \$200.00 to the Road Department. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

Mr. Hare made the motion to approve the use of the \$200.00 cash donation for the Road Department at the discretion of the Road Superintendent. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

ROAD DEPT: Mr. Maltese thanked the Police Department for their help with getting cars removed. Stated it's been a busy week. Last Wednesday had five massive trees fall and were in twice the night before Thanksgiving. Stated that his crew has been doing a great job.

Mr. Hare asked if there has been an update to the plow contract with the county and Ms. Port stated that she talked to Mr. Haupt and he stated that everything is running smoothly with plowing the county roads.

Ms. Port stated that she reached out to Mr. Hajjar and he emailed her back to set up a meeting to discuss projects for 2026. Planning the meeting for December 11th in the afternoon.

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ROAD: DONATION: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to accept a Giant Eagle gift card donation from Christopher Hare in the amount of \$50.00 to the Road Department. Ms. Port seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

Mr. Mueller made the motion to approve the use of the \$50.00 gift card donation for the Road Department at the discretion of the Road Superintendent. Ms. Port seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

TOWN HALL: WINTERIZE PROPOSAL: Mrs. Walder stated that she has not heard back from Kobella regarding the acceptance of the modified terms and conditions.

Mrs. Walder stated she talked with Mr. Kolk and plans a handoff of fiscal coordination matters later this week. Mrs. Walder stated that she received a proposal for the removal of the bleachers and re-working the benches at Bob Hall field and has given it to Mr. Kolk.

Mrs. Walder stated that open enrollment for the benefits program has started. Anyone that is full-time and on township benefits needs to fill out the enrollment form and return to Ms. Dorka.

YEAR-END: Mrs. Walder stated that the Fiscal Office appreciates the Department Head's cooperation on stopping spending for 2025. Mrs. Walder encourages the Department Heads to start working on their 2026 requisitions.

AMENDED AMOUNTS & RATES: TAX COLLECTION YEAR 2025-2026: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to adopt the Amended Rate Resolution 2025-33: accepting the amounts and rates as determined by the Budget Commission and authorizing the necessary tax levies and certifying them to the County Auditor, as recommended by the Fiscal Officer. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

TAX ADVANCE REQUEST: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to approve Resolution 2025-32, a Request for Advance of Taxes Collected for 2026. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

ARPA GRANT: CLOSE OUT REPORT: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to authorize the Close Out Report for the 2023 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant initiatives. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

ARPA REPORT: AUTHORIZED SIGNATORY: *Mr. Hare made the motion to authorize Fiscal Officer Karen Walder to act as signatory on and to submit the Close Out Report for the 2023 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant on behalf of the Russell Township Board of Trustees. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

BID AWARD: 8460 RIDGEWOOD RD: DEMOLITION AWARD: Mrs. Walder stated that she received three proposals for this project and forwarded them to the Trustees. After review, Mrs. Walder's recommendation is Green Vision Materials, explaining that they demonstrated the most knowledge and experience with the requirements of the project and the township has prior experience with this vendor.

Mr. Mueller stated in theory the township should get all this money back because it will be on the tax duplicate for the property.

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Mr. Hare asked if this includes the removal of the junk vehicles. Mrs. Walder stated that it does include the junk vehicles that have been identified by Board through the Resolution but there is one additional vehicle in the garage, which the scope of the work is for them to pull the vehicle out so it can be determined if it is a junk vehicle or not. The Board may need to pass additional action for its removal.

Mr. Hare made the motion that the project entitled "Demolition of Structure & Removal of Junk Motor Vehicles," located at 8460 Ridgewood Road, Russell Township, Geauga County, be awarded to Green Vision Materials, Inc., from Newbury, Ohio, for

the amount of \$21,400.00, per the proposal dated December 1, 2025. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

FISCAL OFFICER: Mrs. Walder stated that she virtually attended the property tax planning meeting that the county conducted and believes it's available on YouTube and encourages everyone to watch it. Stated she was invited to participate in a panel hosted by the League of Women Voters on public education forum on property taxes and local services, which will be held on February 25th at 6:30 pm at Bainbridge Public Library.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC WERE RECEIVED

OCRI MOU for POLICE & FIRE: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to accept the Memorandum of Understanding between the University of Cincinnati, on behalf of The Ohio Cyber Range Institute (OCRI), and the Russell Township Board of Trustees for access to free local government entities via the Ohio Persistent Cyber Improvement Program (O-PCI.) Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

OCRI AGREEMENT: CONTACT APPOINTMENTS: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to appoint Nick Sambula as the Primary Point of Contact and Thomas Swaidner as the Secondary Point of Contact for the OCRI Agreement for Fire & Police Department Cybersecurity training. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

OCRI MOU: AUTH SIGNAT: *Mr. Hare made the motion to authorize Chair Kristina Port to act as the Partner's signatory for the documents related to the agreement for cybersecurity training for the Russell Township Police and Fire Departments including the Memorandum of Understanding between the University of Cincinnati/Ohio Cyber Range Institute (OCRI) and the Russell Township Board of Trustees and Exhibit A. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

POLICY MANUAL: Ms. Port stated that she asked Clemans-Nelson for clarification regarding compensation of overtime and stated her concern is that it was too open-ended. Mr. Hare had some comments but will e-mail them. Mrs. Palmer stated she will put approval of the revised policy manual on for the next meeting.

2026 TRUSTEE MEETING SCHEDULE: Mrs. Palmer stated that they usually approve the meeting schedule in December, and with Mrs. Heutmaker at the meeting to include her comments about the schedule. The trustees and Mrs.

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Heutmaker agree to keeping the meetings on Thursdays and will continue having the first meeting of the month at 2:00 pm. The second meeting of the month will now be at 6:00 pm. Mrs. Palmer stated that starting in 2026 the meetings will be recorded and posted for viewing afterward. Will approve the final schedule at the next meeting.

VOLUNTEER FIRE FIGHTERS' DEPENDENTS FUND BOARD: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to appoint Christopher Hare and Trustee-elect Amy Heutmaker as the Township Trustee representatives to the Volunteer Fire Fighters' Dependents Fund Board for 2026. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

COMMUNITY ROOM: GOVERNMENT, CIVIC, & CHARITABLE RENTAL POLICY: There was brief discussion regarding a rental agreement for HOA's and the Park Board to use the Community Room if the township shuts down the Town Hall for the winter. Mr. Hare stated that they would still sign the Hold Harmless agreement like they did for the Town Hall. Mr. Hare stated that he received some suggestions from Mrs. Walder. Stated that it is primarily to create an advantageous rental agreement for charitable organizations and HOAs. Added that public comments must be permitted. Mr. Hare stated that he is going to take some of the feedback he

received from Mrs. Walder and will clean it up and will send it to the APA for review. Mr. Mueller suggested adding a category that includes social organizations that service Russell Township. Mrs. Palmer stated a provision in previous agreements that if the trustees or township had a need or an emergency that trustee/township need trumped all other needs and has priority. Mr. Hare is hopefully that this agreement can be approved at the next meeting.

RESOLUTION OF CONGRATULATIONS: JAMES MUELLER: *Ms. Port made the motion to adopt Resolution 2025-34: A Resolution of Congratulations for James Mueller upon his retirement from decades of public service. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

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

The meeting moved into executive session at 6:54 pm.

*Item #1: Melissa Palmer, Chief Swaidner, Karen Walder, Jessica Ezzone
In at 6:54 pm; out at 6:55 pm*

*Item #2: Melissa Palmer, Chief Swaidner, Karen Walder, Jessica Ezzone
In at 6:55 pm; out at 6:56 pm*

*Item #3: Melissa Palmer, Chief Swaidner, Karen Walder, Jessica Ezzone
In at 6:56 pm; out at 6:56 pm*

*Item #4: Melissa Palmer, Chief Swaidner, Karen Walder, Jessica Ezzone
In at 6:56 pm; out at 7:05 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 7:05pm.

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#1 POLICE: VACATION BUYBACK: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to accept the Memorandum of Understanding, signed on November 25, 2025, by local OPBA representative Vince Valerio, to approve payment for the equivalent of 40 hours of vacation for employee Daniel Fracci. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

#2 DAVE DIETRICH: CONSULTING AGREEMENT: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to accept the proposal emailed to Melissa Palmer on November 24, 2025, by Planning & Zoning Services LLC for David Dietrich to provide assistance to Russell Township & Zoning Department staff Frank Kolk and Bonnie Guyer, at a rate of \$40.00 per hour up to \$3,200.00, pending Fiscal Office certification. 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 7:08 pm.

Kristina Port, Chair

Karen Walder, Fiscal Officer

Recorded by: J. Ezzone