

COMMUNITY ROOM

March 5, 2026

The meeting was called to order at 2:32 p.m. by chairperson Hare. Trustee Port and Trustee Heutmaker were present. Board Administrator Melissa Palmer was present. Fiscal Officer Karen Walder was present via Teams.

The following Department Heads were present: Police Chief Tom Swaidner, Fire Chief John Frazier, Road Superintendent Giovanni Maltese and Zoning Inspector Frank Kolk. Zoning Secretary Bonnier Guyer was present.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

CLERK PRO TEM: In the absence of a Fiscal Officer, Board of Trustees Chair Christopher Hare appoints Jennifer Dorka to serve as clerk pro tem.

Mr. Hare announced its Russell Township's 199th birthday today.

MINUTES: *Ms. Port made the motion to accept the minutes of the Regular Meeting held on February 19, 2026, as presented. Mrs. Heutmaker seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

GUEST: PETE FORMICA, VERDANTAS: MS4 BIOSWALE: Mr. Maltese stated that passing the Resolution would exempt the Township from installing the bioswale. Mr. Formica stated while working on the design for the bioswale, he told Mr. Maltese that the bioswale isn't the only option to satisfy the Ohio EPA's code: one would be to change the regulations with a Resolution abiding by a certain table for stormwater management. Mr. Formica stated that he talked to Ed Wilk from the EPA regarding the letter from Geauga County requesting them to put in a bioswale, and Mr. Wilk stated the Township can choose any one of the options given. A resolution was drafted and forwarded it to Mr. Maltese. The APA received the document yet was unfamiliar with the subject matter regarding the bioswale.

RESOLUTION: BIOSWALE: *Mrs. Heutmaker made the motion to approve Resolution 2026-7: A Resolution adopting post-construction Storm Water Management Regulations requiring Compliance with Ohio EPA Construction General Permit No. OHC000005, including Table 4b Practices in Russell Township. Ms. Port seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

ROAD PROJECTS: IMPROVEMENTS: RESOLUTION: *Ms. Port made the motion to approve Resolution 2026-6: A Resolution which orders the Asphalt Resurfacing of Various Roads (Cypress Pond Lane, Harmony Falls Lane, and Gamekeepers Trail) adopts the plans and specifications, and orders that the project be let for bid. Mrs. Heutmaker seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

TOUCH-A-TRUCK EVENT: Mr. Maltese stated that instead of a touch-a-truck event, it's going to be a Russell Township Community Day. It's going to be on July 18th from 12:00 pm to 4:00 pm at the West Geauga Commons.

ROAD: FUNDS REQUEST: *Ms. Port made the motion to approve funds in the amount of \$2,700.00 for team building, communications development, & enrichment experiences for the Road Department staff at the discretion of the Road Superintendent. Mrs. Heutmaker seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

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SCRAP TIRE GRANT: Mr. Kolk said he received the letter of approval for this grant. It will be held in August and there is an 8-tire limit per resident.

LANDSCAPE PROPOSALS: Mr. Kolk stated that he has reached out to landscape companies for quotes and Mrs. Palmer stated that it will be on the next meeting's agenda.

ZONING: AIR B&B LEGISLATION: Mrs. Guyer stated that the Zoning Commission wanted information to be passed along regarding Senate Bill 104, which proposes to eliminate any restrictions the Townships have on short-term rentals. OTA opposes the restrictions and the Zoning Commission wants the Trustees to know they oppose it as well, which are prohibited in the Zoning Resolution. Ms. Port has concerns regarding septic systems and occupancy capacity if there were rentals.

ZONING FORMS: Mr. Hare stated that he would like the updated zoning forms for the next trustee meeting.

POLICE: SLCGP CYBER GRANT: Chief Swaidner stated that there is no update on this, still waiting on a response back. Stated he sent a follow-up email this morning.

POLICE OFFICER EMPLOYMENT: UPDATE: Chief Swaidner stated he has been interviewing a couple of candidates and applications are still coming in.

POLICE UPDATES: Chief Swaidner stated that they hosted Girl Scouts and they earned their forensic badge. Detective LaMonica headed the training and did some fingerprint analysis and toured the Police Station.

Chief Swaidner stated that they participated in Your Life, Your Choice awareness program hosted by the Geauga County Sheriff's Department. The program is to educate local high school students about the dangers of operating a vehicle under the influence of alcohol.

Chief Swaidner stated they will be having a senior safety seminar in April or May to talk through safety tips.

FIRE: .GOV DOMAIN: *Mr. Hare made the motion to authorize Chief Frazier to apply for the DHS based CyberOhio migration application grant for the Fire Department's change to a .gov domain with a known match cost of up to 20%. Ms. Port seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

FIRE: DONATION: *Mrs. Heutmaker made the motion to accept the donation from Kristin McCormick, of a 2007 Pontiac Torrent automobile, with 149,410 miles, to the Fire Department to be used for training purposes. Ms. Port seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

Ms. Port made the motion to approve the 2007 Pontiac Torrent automobile donation to be used for training purposes by the Fire Department at the discretion of the Fire Chief. Mrs. Heutmaker seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

FIRE: DORMITORY PROJECT: CHANGE ORDER APPROVAL: Chief Frazier stated that the change order is adding a tank, pump and a valve to shut off the domestic water in the sprinkler head would go off. Initially the building department felt they could work with the system tied to the water line but turned

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out to be insufficient so have to move to a different system. Required to have a 10-minute flow on each sprinkler head but when the contractor's vendor did the testing, it did not. Mr. Hare asked Mrs. Walder if the capital grant funding could be applied to this change order and Mrs. Walder advised that because the funds encumbered last year for this contract were based on architects' estimate, there are already sufficient funds encumbered to cover the change order.

Ms. Port made the motion, at the recommendation of James Ptacek, Larsen Architects, to approve Change Order No. 2 to the Fire Department Dormitory Project:

<i>Change Requests per Owner</i>	<i>Add</i>	<i>\$12,132.00</i>
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resulting in a \$12,132.00 increase to the United Contractors, Inc. Contract Value to perform the action items identified in an email to Russell Township Trustees on March 5, 2026 from JP Ptacek, and on Change Order #2, from United Contractors, Inc., dated March 4, 2026, for a new contract value of \$164,271.65. Mrs. Heutmaker seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Chief Frazier stated that plumbing and electrical are done and is actually ahead of schedule. Ms. Port asked when Phase 2 will happen and Chief Frazier stated that will be discussed in the budget workshops.

AUTHORIZED SIGNATORY: *Mrs. Heutmaker made the motion to authorize Trustee Hare to sign Change Order #2 to the United Contractors, Inc. Contract, for the Fire Department Dormitory Project, on behalf of the Russell Township Board of Trustees, Change Order #2 dated March 4, 2026. Ms. Port seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

FO REPORT 4Q: Mrs. Walder stated that the estimated revenue was \$7.74 million but actual revenue was \$8 million. Estimated expenditures were \$10.78 million and the actual was \$9.16 million. There was over \$450,000 in unspent capital appropriations. Further discussion will be held for the March 16th meeting.

Ms. Port made the motion to acknowledge receipt of the 4th Quarter 2025 report from the Russell Township Fiscal Officer. Mrs. Heutmaker seconded the motion, and the votes are as follows: Mrs. Heutmaker no; Ms. Port yes; Mr. Hare yes and the motion passed.

AOS ENGAGEMENT LETTER: AUTHORIZED SIGNATORY: *Ms. Port made the motion to authorize Karen Walder to sign the Letter of Engagement from Charles E. Harris & Associates, Inc., working on behalf of the Auditor of State, for the audit period 2024-2025. Mrs. Heutmaker seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

AMENDED CERTIFICATE: There was discussion regarding not approving the Amended Certificate, but Mrs. Walder stated that if it's not accepted she cannot continue preparation of permanent appropriations, which are due by March 31st. The Amended Certificate is a statement of fact that identifies the Township revenue certified by the Geauga County Budget Commission, including carryover, levies and inside millage. Mr. Hare and Mrs. Heutmaker agree to accept the Amendment Certificate so Mrs. Walder can continue preparing permanent appropriations and will continue discussion about the carryover at the March 16th meeting.

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Mr. Hare made the motion to accept the Amended Certificate of Estimated Resources #1 for Russell Township for the fiscal year beginning January 1, 2026, as revised by the Budget Commission and dated February 18, 2026. Mrs. Heutmaker seconded the motion, and the votes are as follows: Mrs. Heutmaker yes; Ms. Port no; Mr. Hare yes and the motion passed.

SALARY SCHEDULE: *Ms. Port made the motion to adopt Salary Schedule 45, content approved February 19, 2026, and effective March 1, 2026. Mrs. Heutmaker seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

WASTE MANAGEMENT: AUTHORIZE FO: *Mrs. Heutmaker made the motion to authorize Fiscal Officer Karen Walder to provide and sign the Notice of Cancellation to Waste Management Inc to cancel rubbish collection services for the four township owned properties per the timing requirements indicated in the Waste Management Terms of the Service Agreement. Ms. Port seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC WERE RECEIVED

DONATION POLICY: *Mr. Hare made the motion to accept the Donation Policy as distributed to the Trustees on February 19, 2026. Ms. Port seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

STATE CAPITAL GRANT: REMANING FUNDS: There was a brief discussion regarding the remaining state capital funds, which were supposed to go towards the Community Room. Ms. Port stated she would like to have automated handicap doors installed. It was noted that since the funds need to be used by the end of June, the Board may want to revisit the purchase of patio furniture.

AMERICA 250: Brief discussion about Chester having a car show and fireworks on either July 3rd or 4th and the fire department was asked if a squad could be provided, yet more information would be gathered from Chester Township. Mr. Hare noted that Chester Township is seeking speakers and historical impersonators for their America 250 event.

LEADERSHIP GEAUGA ADULT SIGNATRUE PROGRAM: Mrs. Palmer stated that 2026/2027 application portal is open. Asked the trustees to consider sponsoring an employee. If they sponsor an employee, a tuition loan agreement would be set up.

MEMORIAL DAY PLANNING: There was brief discussion regarding Memorial Day, and trustees stated they will ask the Historical Society if they would like to schedule a meeting to discuss plans. The date will be May 17. Ms. Port stated will need to order a facility. Ms. Port asked Mr. Kolk to look at the trees by the flagpole and make sure there are no issues with branches.

CEMETERY/VETERAN'S FLAGS: Ms. Dorka stated that the new flags will be \$282.89 and the Veterans Department will reimburse the Township for \$100. Stated that Troop 193 will come out on May 9th to put the flags out.

Mrs. Heutmaker made the motion, at the Cemetery Clerk's request, to authorize the purchase of a new supply of U.S. flags for use at gravesites at Russell Township cemeteries for an amount up to \$300.00. Ms. Port seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

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Ms. Port suggested having a Community Day event at Wiegland's Lake for the Township's 200th birthday in 2027.

Trustees discussed a special meeting for Zoning interviews for Saturday March 14th at 12:30 pm.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: *Ms. Port made the motion to move into executive session to discuss the employment and compensation of public employee pursuant to ORC 121.22 (G) (1). Mrs. Heutmaker seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

The meeting moved into executive session at 4:39 pm.

Item #1: Melissa Palmer

In at 4:43 pm; out at 5:00pm

Item #2: Melissa Palmer

In at 5:00 pm; out at 5:01pm

Item #3: Melissa Palmer

In at 5:01 pm; out at 5:08 pm

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

The meeting moved to regular session at 5:08 pm.

#2 SARA SUSTIN: WG COMMUNITY JOINT RECREATION DISTRICT: *Ms. Port made the motion to reappoint Ms. Sara Sustin to the West Geauga Community Joint Recreation District Board for the three-year term ending April 30, 2029. Mrs. Heutmaker seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

PURCHASE ORDERS AND BILLS WERE APPROVED AS ATTACHED.

Ms. Port made the motion to adjourn. Mrs. Heutmaker seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:09 pm.

Christopher Hare, Chair

Karen Walder, Fiscal Officer

Recorded by: J. Ezzone