

TOWN HALL

March 6, 2025

The meeting was called to order at 2:03 p.m. by chairperson Port. Trustees Mueller and Hare were present. The Board Administrator Melissa Palmer and Fiscal Officer Karen Walder were present.

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

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

**MINUTES:** *Mr. Mueller made the motion to accept the minutes of the Special Meeting held on February 20, 2025, as presented. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

**ANNUAL REPORTS:** *Mr. Hare made the motion to accept the 2024 annual reports from Facilities & Zoning. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

**ALUMINUM CANS FOR BURNED CHILDREN (ACBC):** Mr. Wrench stated that Nick Liberatore from the Fire Department asked if he could place a tote at the Recycling Center to collect aluminum cans for Burned Children charity. Mr. Wrench stated that is no conflict with GTSWM. Mr. Wrench stated that Mr. Liberatore and the Fire Department will monitor and collect the bin.

*Mr. Hare made the motion to accept the request of the Fire Department, at the recommendation of the Facilities Manager, to place a bin at the Recycling Center for the benefit of the Aluminum Cans for Burned Children charity, to be monitored and maintained by Russell Township Fire Department personnel. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

**FACEBOOK PAGE: FIRE DEPT:** Mrs. Palmer stated that she has give the Fire Department permission to setup a Facebook page. She has given them all the rules and guidelines that need to be followed.

**GREAT LAKES BILLING:** Chief Frazier stated he is waiting on APA to review a claim settlement request.

Ms. Port asked the Chief if he has shopped around for another ambulance billing company. Chief Frazier stated that he has collected everyone's rates in the area, and found it is comparable in pricing.

**FIRE DEPARTMENT:** Ms. Port gave a shoutout the Fire Department for the coordination of the strategic planning workshop. Ms. Port hopes for some results from the goals that were set. Mr. Mueller asked Mrs. Palmer to send a thank you letter to ASM and Mrs. Palmer stated that she will work the Fire Department to get a letter out.

Chief Frazier stated last month Cleveland Clinic had their EMS Awards Gala and Nick Liberatore received the William Sillasen Award, which is their highest awards to receive. It is for recognition for an individual who demonstrates excellence in emergency medical services.

**ROAD EQUIPMENT PURCHASE:** Mr. Layne stated that the truck he would like to purchase is fully outfitted for snow and ice. It will be replacing the 2012 truck, which would be put in backup status. The Road Department currently has six front line plow trucks and two backup trucks. Mr. Layne said it's a good opportunity for a good truck at a good price. Mr. Layne stated that he got 2 other quotes, but they were higher. He noted that the 2012 truck is currently in the shop waiting for parts and it's

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mechanically starting to fail. Stated it would be for immediate delivery. Mr. Layne stated that Munson just received 2 new Western Star and went there to look, and test drive the trucks.

Mrs. Walder advised that the reserve schedule calls for the replacement in 2026 and wants the Board to be satisfied that this is a good use of spending taxpayers money a year earlier than what is recommended by the reserve study. Ms. Port stated that the reserve study is a guideline to manage money for the future, but things come up and may need to be replaced sooner. Appreciates that Mr. Layne stating what the need is and why and the benefits of getting this new truck.

Mrs. Walder stated that she just received a 28-page revision to the proposal documents and hasn't had chance to review it.

*Mr. Hare made the motion to authorize the purchase of a new 2025 Western Star 47X truck per the proposal from Stoops Western Star of Ohio of Wapakoneta, Ohio, for an amount of \$129,189.00, plus an extended warranty for \$4,510.00 (and dealer installed options purchased from Kalida Truck for \$103,800.00,) and Federal excise tax of \$240.00, for a total truck cost of \$237,499.00, off the ODOT State bid, Procurement #023-26, as recommended by Road Superintendent Gene Layne pending APA approval and Fiscal Officer review. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

**ROAD: DEALER INSTALLED OPTIONS PURCHASED FROM KALIDA:** *Mr. Hare made the motion to authorize the purchase of the dealer installed options to be added to the new Western Star 2025 truck: an 11 foot stainless steel dump body and a Gledhill 11 foot snow plow from Kalida Truck Equipment Inc., per the proposal dated March 5, 2025, quote ID KCV0007177, for an amount of \$103,800.00 (expense also identified in the total cost of the truck,) off the ODOT State bid, Procurement #023-26, as recommended by Road Superintendent Gene Layne pending APA approval and Fiscal Officer review. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

**WESTERN STAR TRUCK & PLOW: AUTHORIZED SIGNATORY:** *Mr. Hare made the motion to authorize Fiscal Officer Karen Walder to act as authorized signatory on behalf of the Russell Township Board of Trustees for the purchase agreement presented by Western Star of Ohio for the purchase of the dump truck for the Road Department APA approval and Fiscal Officer review. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

**KALIDA DUMP BODY & PLOW: AUTHORIZED SIGNATORY:** *Mr. Hare made the motion to authorize Fiscal Officer Karen Walder to act as authorized signatory on behalf of the Russell Township Board of Trustees for the purchase agreement presented by Kalida Truck Equipment Inc for the purchase of the dump body and plow for the Road Department APA approval and Fiscal Officer review. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

**ROAD DEPT NETWORK EQUIPMENT UPGRADE:** *Mr. Mueller made the motion to authorize the upgrade of the Russell Road Department network equipment identified in the proposal dated February 27, 2025, quote 2025-204256v1 prepared by Logicalis Inc. at the request of Geauga County ADP, for an amount of \$3,019.98, to be paid with Road Department funds. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

**LOGICALIS: AUTHORIZED SIGNATORY:** *Mr. Hare made the motion to authorize Fiscal Officer Karen Walder to act as authorized signatory on behalf of the Russell Township Board of Trustees for the quotation presented by Logicalis Inc for the network equipment upgrade for the Road Department. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

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**MILLER-DODSON: ROAD PAVING:** Mr. Mueller is confident that the Road Superintendent can keep track of the Township roads. Mr. Layne said he started a road paving program, and roads are usually good for 15-20 years. Mr. Mueller doesn't want to duplicate what Mr. Layne is already doing. Mr. Hare asked Mrs. Walder what Miller-Dodson wanted to do with the paving. Mrs. Walder stated that they would set up a schedule over the next 40 years of which roads should be replaced each year and how much it would cost. Mr. Hare asked if it would be a good tool for the next Road Superintendent. Mr. Layne said he has all the records of when roads were replaced and will be passed down to the next Road Superintendent.

**TOWNSHIP PROPERTY: BOB HALL FIELD:** *Mr. Mueller made the motion to grant permission for the West Geauga Baseball Federation to use Bob Hall Field from April 7, 2025 - through July 19, 2025, with certificate of liability insurance currently on file & to be renewed upon expiration, subject to Township rules and regulations, and subject to continued availability. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

**PROFESSIONAL LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT SERVICES:** *Mr. Hare made the motion to enter contract negotiations with Robert Morgan LLC for the required professional landscape architectural design services on the Community Room Project as Robert Morgan LLC was the firm determined to be most qualified for this project by the Board of Trustees. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

**ROBERT MORGAN LLC:** *Mr. Hare made the motion to approve the Robert Morgan LLC landscape architecture services proposal, dated February 18, 2025, for the price of \$3,600.00, plus reimbursable expenses up to an amount of \$500.00. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

**AUTH SIGNATORY:** *Mr. Hare made the motion authorizing Fiscal Officer Karen Walder to sign and execute the Robert Morgan LLC landscape architecture services proposal, dated February 18, 2025. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

**LANDSCAPE ESTIMATES 2025: MULTIPLE PROPERTIES:** *Mr. Mueller made the motion to approve the CJ Landscape, LLC landscape maintenance estimate, at the recommendation of the Facilities Manager, entitled Russell Township Landscape Worksheet 2025, sent to the trustees in an email dated February 26, 2025, for the price of \$36,007.86. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

**AUTH SIGNATORY:** *Mr. Hare made the motion authorizing Fiscal Officer Karen Walder to sign and execute the CJ Landscape LLC contract for 2025. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

**GTSWMD DIG GRANT:** Mr. Wrench stated that the Township has been approved for grant money to have 12 Evergreens placed around the Recycling Center and to have a dead Evergreen removed. Mrs. Walder stated that she has not seen any agreements, so don't know if there are any obligations for the Township to encumber any funds or not. Mr. Wrench stated that the Township is responsible for 10% of the cost. Mrs. Walder stated that she would need to prepare a Fiscal Office Certification before executing the agreement. Mrs. Walder stated that she needs to review the DocuSign that Ms. Port received.

*Mr. Mueller made the motion to accept the Drop-off Improvement Grant Agreement in the amount of \$8,636.36, dated February 17, 2025, and to authorize Kristina Port to act as Russell Township's authorized signatory for the 2025 Drop-off Improvement Grant Agreement with Geauga Trumbull Solid Waste Management District pending*

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*Fiscal Office certification. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

**ZONING CANDIDATE INTERVIEW:** The Board discussed when to setup up an interview for the BZA candidate. They agree to have it before the next Trustee meeting on March 20<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm.

**POLICE DEPT:** Chief Swaidner stated that he had 2 officers participated in Your Life Your Choice Awareness Program put on by the Geauga County Sheriff's Office. It's an alcohol/OVI awareness program for high school students in Geauga County. They hear stories from people that have been affected by drinking and driving.

Chief Swaidner gave an update on his new building. Monday they are scheduled to finish Phase 3, which is the interior finishes. The only other thing left is to have the electrician set the fixtures and supply service to the building.

**CEMETERY/VETERAN'S FLAGS:** *Mr. Mueller 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. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

**BUDGET WORKSHOP DATES:** Mrs. Walder asked that the Department Heads have all capital requests into ClearGov by May 15<sup>th</sup>. Stated she would like to have the proposed budget and binders out by May 30<sup>th</sup>. Mrs. Walder asked to set dates for the Budget Workshops and is looking at the week of June 9<sup>th</sup>. Trustees agree to do the workshops on June 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>. The Budget Hearing could then be scheduled for June 18<sup>th</sup>.

**UPDATE ON RESERVE STUDY:** Mrs. Walder stated that our representative from Miller-Dodson came out on Tuesday and was able to visit all of the facilities, and that he has already sent a follow-up email with some questions. Mrs. Walder stated that he is hoping to get us a draft report within the next month and then will have the Department Heads review each of their sections.

Mr. Wrench stated that each Department Head got to spend some time with him and ask him questions. Mr. Wrench stated that the representative asked about funds for interior items or if a renovation needed to be done because items are outdated. Mrs. Walder stated she would need to look at the ORC for reserve funds, if that's something that can be done.

**UPDATE ON TENANT MIGRATION:** Mrs. Walder stated that it is completed and the everyone at the Administration Building and Road Department is on the new email system. Everyone has returned to their regular computer, except for Mr. Layne, which ADP has recommended that we wait till they update the IT equipment. There have been some minor discrepancies which we are working through with ADP. Mrs. Walder stated that we have gotten a lot of emails from KnowBe4, which is ADP cybersecurity and routine training recommendations. ADP advised that while we don't need to complete past training, we will need to do any new training going forward. Mrs. Walder stated that she as instructed her staff to complete the new KnowBe4 training and asked the Trustees to advise their staff to do the same.

**FISCAL OFFICE:** Mrs. Walder stated that yesterday was Russell Township's Founders Day; March 5, 1827, noting there are only 729 days until the Township's Bicentennial.

Mrs. Walder requested that all Department Head's copy herself and Mrs. Ezzone on quarterly and annual reports.

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Mrs. Walder also advised the Board that our County Auditor and former Fiscal Officer Chuck Walder testified this week before the Ohio Senate Ways & Means Committee in support of SB66, which is a measure to provide taxpayers relief from unvoted tax increases due to revaluation.

**COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC WERE RECEIVED**

**ADP PURCHASE PLAN:** Mrs. Palmer stated that the project is underway and in the process of ordering a Trustee laptop but waiting for a proposal from ADP. Mrs. Palmer is hoping to get an assessment from ADP on computer equipment because a lot of our stuff is old. Stated that we should get on a replacement program with ADP. Mrs. Palmer stated that the Township must adhere to certain standards by ADP. Mrs. Walder noted that since we came under ADP, they have provided us with quotes and ADP approvals for IT-related purchases for Admin, Road, Fiscal and Zoning.

**US PROTECTIVE SERVICES:** Mr. Wrench stated that Mrs. Walder signed off on the agreement today and sent it back to US Protective Services and they will get us on the schedule ASAP.

**EXTENDING: STROLLO SERVICES:** Ms. Port stated that we will need to encumber more money for Strollo for services in March. Mrs. Walder stated that at the January 21<sup>st</sup> meeting, we extended Strollo's services through February 28<sup>th</sup>. Mrs. Walder suggests extending their services through March. Mrs. Walder stated that in January, we encumber \$10,000 for additional services provided in January and February but have not been billed for any of those services so don't know where we stand with money. Ms. Port recommends encumbering an additional \$3,000 for Strollo and extending their services through March 31<sup>st</sup>.

*Mr. Hare made the motion to authorize Strollo Architects to provide additional services for the Community Room Project through March 31, 2025. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

**ENCUMBRANCE: STROLLO SERVICES:** *Mr. Hare made the motion to authorize an encumbrance in the amount of \$3,000.00, for additional services by Strollo Architects for the Community Room Project through March 31, 2025. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

**ACM PAY REQUEST #11:** *Mr. Hare made the motion to approve Application #11 for Payment for the Community Meeting Building, invoice date February 11, 2025, in the amount of \$16,567.20 to ACM Construction Management LLC, as recommended by David Roose, Project Manager, Strollo Architects, in an email to Karen Walder dated February 21, 2025. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

**CLEANING START DATE:** Mrs. Walder asked the Board when they should start the cleaning service, since originally it was for March. Board agrees to put it hold for now and will revisit at the next meeting.

The Trustees have until March 28<sup>th</sup> to decide if the Community Room could be used for the May 5<sup>th</sup> primary.

**VENUE AGREEMENT:** Ms. Dorka stated that she is waiting for responses, so she can update the agreement. She needs prices confirmed. Ms. Port asked Ms. Dorka to resend the email with agreement and all her questions and they will discuss at the next meeting.

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

The meeting moved into executive session at 3:48 pm.

*Item #1: Melissa Palmer and Chief John Frazier  
In at 3:51 pm; out at 3:53 pm*

*Item #2: Melissa Palmer  
In at 3:53 pm; out at 3:59 pm*

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

The meeting moved to regular session at 3:59 pm.

**#1 FIRE-EMS RECRUIT APPOINTMENT:** *Mr. Mueller made the motion to appoint Mr. Robert Paris to the position of Fire-EMS Recruit, effective March 7, 2025. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

**#2 WG COMMUNITY JOINT RECREATION DISTRICT:** *Mr. Hare made the motion reappoint Mr. Rick Izant to the West Geauga Community Joint Recreation District Board for the three-year term ending April 2028, pending receipt of a letter of interest. Mr. Mueller 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.*

The meeting was adjourned at 4:01 pm.

Kristina Port, Chair

Karen Walder, Fiscal Officer

Recorded by: J. Ezzone