

TOWN HALL

May 1, 2025

The meeting was called to order at 2:31 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 and Zoning Inspector Shane Wrench. Assistant Fire Chiefs Nick Sambula and Sam Brown were present.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

MINUTES: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to accept the minutes of the Special Meeting held on April 17, 2025, as presented. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

Mr. Hare made the motion to accept the minutes of the Special Meeting held on April 22, 2025, as presented. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

QUARTERLY REPORTS: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to acknowledge receipt of the 1st Quarter 2025 departmental reports from the Police Department. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

QUARTERLY REPORTS: *Mr. Hare made the motion to accept the 1st Quarter 2025 departmental reports from Fire, Road, Facilities, & Zoning. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

FACILITIES: ACOUSTIC UPDATE: Mr. Wrench stated that he received acoustic renderings this morning and provided handouts to the Board. Mr. Wrench stated that they can bring out samples of the panels and the different materials they offer. There was concern about access to the TV equipment on the accent wall, and Mr. Wrench stated that it will be access if they put up panels. The next step is to decide on color and final design so they can give an estimate. Mr. Wrench noted that installation was estimated at four weeks from the date of purchase. Trustees have decided to set up a tentative special meeting for Tuesday May 6th at 3:00 so they can have an estimate for the May 15th meeting.

Mrs. Walder asked Mr. Wrench if the water leak in the Administration Building basement had been taken care of. Mr. Wrench stated that the guy that was supposed to come out on Good Friday with the camera had to cancel for personal reasons. Mr. Wrench has reached out to Auburn Heating & Cooling to reschedule but the guy that does the camera is still out on leave.

ZONING: Mr. Wrench stated that Laurel School will be at the May 12th BZA meeting for their annual meeting. Mr. Wrench stated that May 17th is the joint meeting with all the Boards and asked that any agenda items be sent to the Zoning Secretary. Stated that HB 315 would be a good topic of discussion for this meeting. Mr. Wrench stated that the Zoning Commission wrapped up reviews of chapters 6-12 of the Zoning Resolution.

REFRESHMENTS: *Mr. Hare made the motion, at the Zoning Secretary's request, to authorize the purchase of refreshments for the Joint Zoning Workshop to be held on Saturday, May 17 for an amount up to \$200.00. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

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FIRE DEPT: STRATEGIC PLAN: Asst. Fire Chief Sambula gave an update on the strategic plan. Stated that they received the first draft and had some minor updates.

Stated that draft 2 will be reviewed by the Ohio Association of Fire Chiefs and they should have draft 2 back by end of next week to review. Once it is approved, it will be printed and hopefully will have it by June 1st. Asst. Fire Chief Sambula stated they will have a PDF copy so it can be posted on the website. Mr. Mueller suggested having a public hearing.

FIRE DEPT: TRAINING UPDATES: Asst. Fire Chief Brown stated they have conducted four EMS continuing educational classes, two of which were national lectures under their new training center certification. Stated that in May they have been asked to participate in a regional park rescue series with Chagrin Valley Fire Department and expect to work with Orange Village and Solon's Fire Departments.

Asst. Fire Chief Brown stated that they have scheduled a two-day advance auto extrication class that Russell Fire Department will be hosting in October, which will include two EMS/Trauma lectures and then two days of hands-on auto extrication with instructors from Chicago Fire and Cleveland Fire. Stated that they have 6 ambulances that have been donated to them for this training.

Asst. Fire Chief Brown stated that Jacob Ebright has scheduled for the Ohio Fire Academy Fire Blaster lab, which they will host in early November. They have invited several surrounding departments to participate as well.

FIRE DEPT: Mrs. Palmer asked Chief Frazier if the 511 Park Board reached out to him regarding the bridge they want to build. Chief Frazier stated that they did, and he reviewed the plans, and it will work for their vehicles.

Mr. Hare asked the Fire Department if they had thought about doing what the Police Department is doing for community outreach sessions. Mr. Hare stated that he would like the Fire Department to use the opioid funds for anything that pertains to community outreach on opioids. Asst Chief Sambula advised that carry Narcan kits on their rescue vehicles.

FISCAL OFFICE: Mrs. Walder sends her condolences to family and close friends of the passing of the Honorable Mary Jane Trapp.

Mrs. Walder encourages everyone to vote in next Tuesday's election.

Mrs. Walder stated that we have received the Menards credit card and it's ready for departments to use.

Mrs. Walder stated that budget prep continues. Stated that departments have started submitting capital requests in ClearGov and would like everything to be submitted by May 15th.

Mrs. Walder stated that she received the draft copy of the reserve study and reviewed it with the Department Heads. Stated that she sent back the draft this morning with comments from the Department Heads.

Mrs. Walder stated that she would like input from the Department Heads regarding trash haulers. Stated that Waste Management prices kept getting higher. Mrs. Walder stated that we got an estimate from Dumpster Bandit and would save a few hundred dollars a year. Ms. Port asked if we have looked at other haulers and the Trustee's would like to get pricing from other companies as well to compare. Chief Frazier stated he has no problem switching companies.

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AMENDED CERTIFICATE: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to accept the Amended Certificate of Estimated Resources #3 for Russell Township for the fiscal year beginning January 1, 2025, as revised by the Budget Commission and dated April 21, 2025. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

ACM PAY REQUEST #12: *Mr. Hare made the motion to approve Application #12 for Payment for the Community Meeting Building, invoice date April 14, 2025, in the amount of \$4,433.52 to ACM Construction Management LLC, as recommended by David Roose, Project Manager, Strollo Architects, in an email to Karen Walder dated April 22, 2025. Mr. Muller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

RESOLUTION 2025-13: TRANSFER FUNDS: *Mr. Hare made the motion to approve Resolution 2025-13: a resolution authorizing the transfer of funds to the Road & Bridge Fund as allowed by the ORC. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

RESOLUTION 2025-14: CAPITAL PROJECT FUNDS: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to approve Resolution 2025-14: a resolution requesting the establishment of Capital Project Funds as allowed by the ORC. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

BWC GROUP RETROSPECTIVE RATING: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to approve Russell Township's return to the Bureau of Workers' Compensation Group Retrospective rating program. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

AUTHORIZED SIGNATORY: *Mr. Hare made the motion to authorize Karen Walder to act as Russell Township's authorized signatory for the Bureau of Workers' Compensation Group Retrospective application approved May 1, 2025. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

ELECTRIC UTILITY PLAN: *Mrs. Walder stated that we are coming off the 30-month agreement and we are up for renewal. Stated that our energy broker does not recommend locking in for a long period, so Mrs. Walder recommends the 12-month term at \$0.0775 kWh.*

Mr. Mueller made the motion to approve the new electric utility plan terms, presented by Ryan Boucher, of Fidelis United Energy Solutions LLC, for a 12-month fixed contract at \$0.0775 kWh, with Smartest Energy. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

FISCAL OFFICER AUTHORIZATION: *Mr. Hare made the motion to authorize Fiscal Officer Karen Walder to sign the Smartest Energy Sales Agreement on behalf of Russell Township based on pricing dated April 30, 2025. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

NOPEC OPT OUT: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to opt-out of the NOPEC electric rate program notice, due May 7, 2025, and to authorize the Fiscal Officer to sign & return the NOPEC Opt-Out notice for all township accounts. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

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OSC CONFERENCE TAKEWAYS: Mrs. Ezzone gave a quick update on some takeaways from the OSC conference that included topics on psychological safety, self-care and grief.

OHIO ASSOCIATION of PUBLIC TREASURERS: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to authorize reasonable and necessary expenses for up to two Fiscal Office members to attend the OAPT Annual Fiscal Officer Training Program from June 5-6, 2025, in Sandusky, Ohio. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

FISCAL OFFICER'S REPORT: Mrs. Walder stated that payroll and revenue are in line with the budget. Stated that this is the first report that includes the Community Room expense spreadsheet.

Mr. Hare made the motion to acknowledge receipt of the 1st Quarter 2025 report from the Russell Township Fiscal Officer. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC WERE RECEIVED

HEMLOCK HILLS: VILIMAS RESIDENCE UPDATE: The Trustees would like a direct letter from Mr. Drain if he is or isn't representing this property. Chief Frazier stated 505.86 gives the right to the Fire Department or the Health Department to deem a property has condemned, and he has already submitted that letter to the Board.

MS4 REMEDIATION: There was discussion regarding the letter the Board received from the Geauga County Engineer. Trustees asked Mr. Wrench if there are any projects that can be done and stated he could check with Geauga Soil and Water. The letter indicates that the Road Department needs a bio retention swale installed. We have 60 days to get a consultation. Per the ORC, Mrs. Palmer stated that we would need to advertise for professional services. Mrs. Palmer suggests contacting the Engineer's Office to see if we can request an extension to the 60-day window. Mrs. Palmer stated that she can put an ad out tomorrow for professional services.

GTSWMD: SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE: Mrs. Palmer stated that there is a 90-day deadline and asked the Board to read it over so that action can be taken at the next meeting.

WRLC: CARSONITE BOUNDARY MARKERS: *Mr. Hare motion to authorize Pete McDonald, Western Reserve Land Conservancy, to install boundary markers on the property line of 13629 Cuyahoga Trail and the Upper Chagrin Preserve. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

PATIO FURNITURE: There was a brief discussion about patio furniture for the Community Room. Mrs. Ezzone stated that she reached out to Rob Morgan and just received contact information for another vendor for patio furniture. No decisions have been made.

VENUE AGREEMENT: There was a discussion that some language needed clarification regarding security deposits and fees. Ms. Dorka stated that she will update the agreement. Ms. Dorka asked what the max occupancy was for the Community Room and Mr. Wrench stated that he just received the permit, and it

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was for 122. Ms. Dorka stated that OTARMA offered to review the agreement, and she asked the Board if they wanted her to send it to them, and they agreed to send it to OTARMA for review. The Board asked Mr. Wrench to send the occupancy permit to the Fiscal Officer, ACM and Strollo.

CRYPTOCURRENCY: Ms. Port asked Mrs. Walder if she knew anything about government agencies having to accept cryptocurrency as a form of payment. Mrs. Walder said it was just a newly introduced bill but has not been enacted.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: *Mr. Muller made the motion to move into executive session to discuss the employment and compensation of public employees 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 4:53 pm.

Item #1: Melissa Palmer

In at 4:53 pm; out at 4:56 pm

Item #2: Melissa Palmer

In at 4:56 pm; out at 4:57 pm

Item #3: Melissa Palmer

In at 4:57 pm; out at 5:18 pm

Item #4: Melissa Palmer

In at 5:18 pm; out at 5:19 pm

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

The meeting moved to regular session at 5:19 pm.

LEADERSHIP GEAUGA SPONSORSHIP 2025/2026: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to approve the Leadership Geauga Sponsorship Agreement, submitted April 30, 2025, between the Russell Township Trustees and Russell Township employee & Leadership Geauga candidate Brian Beaumier. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

ROAD DEPARTMENT: RETIREMENT: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to regretfully accept the retirement of full-time Road Superintendent Eugene Layne from the employ of Russell Township, based on the letter addressed to Trustees Port and Mueller, dated January 23, 2025, retirement effective July 1, 2025. Ms. Port seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

ROAD SUPERINTENDENT: *Mr. Mueller made the motion, to extend an offer, pending acceptance, to Giovanni Maltese as the full-time Road Superintendent of the Russell Township Road Department. The conditions of employment are as follows: The official starting date is June 1, 2025. A one-year probation period will begin on the official starting date. The pay rate is \$85,280.00 per year. Employment pending receipt of all paperwork by the Fiscal Office; and pending acceptable results of reference checks. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

APPOINTMENT TO THE CITIZENS' PARK BOARD: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to reappoint Ms. LuAnn Judis to the 3-year term on the Citizens' Park Board of Commissioners, expiring the 2nd Monday in May 2028. Mr. Hare*

TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES

SPECIAL

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seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

PURCHASE ORDERS AND BILLS WERE APPROVED AS ATTACHED.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 5:26 pm.

Kristina Port, Chair

Karen Walder, Fiscal Officer

Recorded by: J. Ezzone