

TOWN HALL

May 2, 2024

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m. by Chairperson Port. Trustees Rambo and Mueller were present. The Board Administrator Melissa Palmer and Fiscal Officer Karen Walder were present.

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

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

MINUTES: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to accept the minutes of the Regular Meeting held on April 18, 2024, as presented. Mr. Rambo seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

COUNTY LINE FLOODING UPDATE: Mr. Layne stated that Hunting Valley has hired a contractor and are currently working on replacing an undersized collapsed culvert that was causing the problem.

HILLBROOK LANE SOUTH: LANDSLIDE UPDATE: Mr. Layne stated that the road is still stable. Stated he spoke with the Deputy Engineer from the County Engineer's Office, and they made some suggestions. They can do a real estate acquisition and move the road and Mr. Layne isn't in favor of that. Can do sheet piling to reinforce and then back fill or can just vacate the road. Mr. Layne stated that the engineer's office needs a Resolution of Necessity Convenience to start the engineering process to get an estimate of what sheet piling cost would be. Mr. Rambo asked Mr. Layne what he would suggest, and he suggested sheet piling. Mrs. Palmer asked if the road would need to be repaved and Mr. Layne said if the road stays the way it is, it will not need to be repaved. Ms. Port contacted Chagrin River Watershed to see if any grants could be applied towards the cost but hasn't heard back. Mrs. Walder stated that she will request a resolution for the next trustee meeting.

BID AWARD: DINES ROAD PAVING: Mr. Layne stated that Ronyak Paving was the lowest bid and it's the County Engineer's recommendation to accept their bid. Mr. Layne feels they need to move forward with Dines Road despite what is going on with Hillbrook. There has been so much work put into this project with engineering, OPWC money and the work that the Road Department has been doing.

BUDGET ISSUES: Mrs. Walder stated that with an estimate of \$250,000 to fix the Hillbrook, the Township cannot do both Dines Road and Hillbrook this year, unless we can find other funding. The trustees agree with moving forward with Dines Road paving.

Mr. Mueller made the motion that the project entitled The Road Widening of Sections A-B of Dines Road, TR-0144, Russell Township, Geauga County, be awarded to Ronyak Paving, Inc from Burton, Ohio, for the amount of \$911,825.00, as recommended by the Geauga County Engineer. Mr. Rambo seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

FIRE DEPT: SUPPLEMENTAL INSURANCE: *Mr. Rambo made the motion to approve the Provident Accident & Health Policy Invoice & Bind request, #PRCO-91749-OH10094, dated March 29, 2024, through Burnham & Flower Insurance Group, Plan #1 for an annual premium of \$2,079.00, effective June 6, 2024. Mr.*

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Mueller seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

AUTHORIZED SIGNATORY: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to authorize Kristina Port to act as Russell Township's authorized signatory for the Provident Accident & Health Policy Invoice & Bind request dated March 29, 2024. Mr. Rambo seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

FIRE DEPARTMENT: Ms. Port asked Chief Frazier for an update on the study. Chief Frazier was not sure but stated that he would check with Asst. Fire Chief Sam Brown for an update.

POLICE DEPARTMENT: Chief Swaidner stated they will be having Coffee with a Cop on Saturday, May 25th for residents. Chief Swaidner stated that they installed a US flag drop box in the lobby of the Police Department for residents that have flags that are no longer in use. They have partnered with local Boy and Girl Scout troops to properly dispose of old flags. They posted it on the Police Department's Facebook page and Mrs. Palmer posted it on the Township's Facebook page and website. Ms. Port asked about an update to the Drug Take Back event. Chief Swaidner stated that they got about 100 pounds, and they drop them off at the Sheriff's Office. The Sheriff's Office then turns them over to the DEA for proper disposal.

BRYSON LAWSUITE UPDATE: Mr. Wrench stated he forwarded the trustees an email from the county prosecutor regarding the lawsuit on Fairmount. The judge has granted the township's motion for summary judgment. The defendant has 30 days to appeal the decision.

PATIO HANDRAIL REQUEST: Mr. Wrench stated that he has reached out to a contractor for an estimate to get a handrail installed but has not heard back.

CEMETERY OUTHOUSE FENCE REMOVAL: Mr. Wrench stated he was at the cemetery after the last windstorm and one of the fences had pieces blown off. The fence has dry rot, and he asked the board if they want the fences replaced or just take them down. The trustees said to just take them down.

RUSSELL CENTER FLAG: Mr. Wrench said he bought a new flag just over a year ago and has been shredded by wind. It has been taken down and replaced with a refurbished one and that one is shredding too. Mr. Wrench has another new one but it's more of a cotton material. He would like to get a backup flag. The trustees agree for Mr. Wrench to get a backup flag.

ENGINEER FOR PAVING PROJECT: Mr. Wrench stated that the Admin parking lot may need to be replaced as a result of the construction activity. Mr. Wrench stated that they can speak with Chip Hess about doing some civil engineering for the lot. Mr. Rambo said the options are to do a change order for the current contract and have Chip Hess do the engineering work and have ACM do the asphalt work or completely bid out the project. Would prefer to roll it in as a change order so we don't have to go out for bids but not sure if it's in the budget for this year. Trustees asked Mr. Wrench to investigate costs from Chip Hess for this engineering work.

NATURAL GAS UTILITY PLAN: *Mr. Rambo made the motion to approve the new natural gas utility plan terms, presented by Ryan Boucher of Fidelis United Energy Solutions LLC, of a 24-month fixed contract at \$4.04/mcf, effective*

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October 1, 2024 to September 30, 2026. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

FISCAL OFFICER AUTHORIZATION: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to authorize Fiscal Officer Karen Walder to sign the Natural Gas Sales Agreement on behalf of Russell Township based on pricing dated May 2, 2024. Mr. Rambo seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

CIRCLE K GAS CARDS: Mrs. Walder stated that she read through the terms and conditions and has sent that to the APA for review. Mr. Mueller asked if we considered Sunoco. He was told that plow trucks and fire trucks would have a very hard time getting in and out of Sunoco's parking lot.

Mr. Rambo made the motion to authorize Fiscal Officer Karen Walder to submit applications for Circle K gas cards on behalf of the Russell Township Road, Police, and Fire departments, terms discussed at the February 1, 2024 meeting of the Board of Trustees, pending approval of the Geauga County Prosecutors Office. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

2025 BUDGET PREP REGULAR: Mrs. Walder gave an update on 2025 budget preparations. Mrs. Walder stated that she reached out to and has heard back from our investment advisory with estimates for interest for next year, which is expected to be significantly less than what it currently is. Heard back from our benefits provider on expected increase for major medical costs. Stated she reached out to the Geauga County Engineer on expectations for gas tax, license plate tax and permissive tax changes. She has created the UAN budget which has 32 funds to budget. Stated she let all of the Department Heads know and they have started putting in their capital requests. Stated that Mr. Layne has completed his and they have sat down and reviewed his capital requests. The budget workshops are June 11th and 12th. The Budget Hearing for the Board to adopt the budget is June 20th and the meeting with the County Budget Commission is August 19th.

SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION #4 PREP: Mrs. Walder stated that she is working on a supplemental appropriation for the next trustee meeting. Invited any of the Department Heads that have a capital item or expenditure that has not been put into appropriations to reach out and let her know.

AUDIT UPDATE: Mrs. Walder stated that the audit is completed and commended her staff for a very clean audit. Stated she has reviewed the draft report and will send the report to the Board and will request signatures at the next meeting. Asked Ms. Port if she would like to attend an exit interview or we can waive it. Ms. Port would like to schedule an exit interview.

OTHER FISCAL OFFICE UPDATES: Mrs. Walder stated that she will be working remotely for the next 2 weeks but can be reached by phone or email. Mrs. Walder stated that the advertisement for the Town Hall Study was published and asked for the proposals back by May 9th.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC WERE RECEIVED

COMMUNITY MEETING BUILDING: BUILDING FURNITURE COSTS: Mrs. Ezzone sent the Trustees 3 different cost options on furniture for the Community Building; a low, middle, and high cost. Mrs. Ezzone told the trustees they can pick

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and choose which tables and chairs they wanted to go with. Storage space was brought up and the trustees asked Mrs. Ezzone to inquire about height size of the different stacked chairs. The trustees also asked Mrs. Ezzone to ask if they could purchase the tables and chairs and have a delivery date for later, and Mrs. Ezzone stated that she will look into this.

MEMORIAL DAY PLANNING UPDATE: Ms. Port stated that Memorial Day planning is coming together and has most things line but just waiting to hear back from the Boy Scouts. Mr. Rambo offered to look for a speaker. Ms. Port asked Mr. Layne if he could update the times on the Memorial Day signs to 2:00 – 4:00pm.

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

The meeting moved into executive session at 2:55 pm.

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

The meeting moved to regular session at 3:49 pm.

LEADERSHIP GEUGA SPONSORSHIP 2024/2025: *Mr. Rambo made the motion to approve the Leadership Geauga Sponsorship Agreement, dated May 2nd, 2024, between the Russell Township Trustees and Russell Township employee & Leadership Geauga candidate Jessica Ezzone. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

PURCHASE ORDERS AND BILLS WERE APPROVED AS ATTACHED.

Mr. Rambo made the motion to adjourn. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:50 pm.

Kristina Port, Chair

Karen Walder, Fiscal Officer

Recorded by: J. Ezzone