

RUSSELL TOWN HALL

June 18, 2025

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. Trustees Port, Mueller and Hare were present. The Fiscal Officer and Board Administrator were also present.

The following Department Heads were present: Police Chief Tom Swaidner.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

VILIMAS PROPERTY: GUESTS: M. Drain, Esq. and S. Wieland, Esq. were present and participated in the topic of discussion. Ms. Port summarized the matter to date. Ms. Wieland went over ORC 505.86 & 505.86F, which explains the process of whether the township chooses to take down the home on the property in question. The township would need to have a title search done for the property; the township already has a declaration that the property is unsafe from the Fire Chief. Mr. Mueller indicated that he would like to start the process and brought up the abandoned vehicles on the property, which Ms. Wieland explained was a Zoning matter.

The board was informed by Mr. Drain that the cousins that are interested in the inheritance will not go on the property or enter the home to remove belongings due to the unsafe state of the home. The Board was informed that the cousins of the deceased homeowner intend to have the house taken down but don't have a timeframe for that to happen. The township can start the process that is required of them to follow per ORC and if the family steps in to take over the township can step back at that time. The Board Administrator noted that the EPA no longer requires a permit, form or inspection but the Geauga Building Department does, which is usually handled by the demolition contractor.

The Fiscal Officer advised the Board that she had drafted a Resolution to proceed and received the Board's agreement to present it for the Board to consider. Mrs. Walder read a proposed resolution #2025-19 aloud which would start the process of having the home removed per ORC 505.86.

Mr. Mueller made the motion to approve Resolution 2015-19. Ms. Port seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC WERE RECEIVED.

PHISHING/CYBERSECURITY UPDATE: GUEST: Geauga County Auditor Charles Walder addressed the board with the growing concern of QR codes being used as a phishing scam. He warned everyone not to scan QR codes with any government owned device and for the township to have a policy that employees must type the URL into a browser. He also highly recommended the township have a policy like the county does stating that employees should not use free Wi-Fi with a government owned device. He noted that ADP has hotspots that can be signed out. Mrs. Walder noted that the Township has a hotspot available in the fiscal office.

TOWN HALL PROJECT: GUEST: Michael Chesler from the Chesler Group was in attendance to answer any questions that the board had regarding the Town Hall restoration. His recommendations followed what was stated in the proposal and that the best use for the building would be to move it away from the corner and have it restored. The Board asked about a phased approach and also options to address acoustics. Mr. Chesler noted that doing the restoration all at one time seems like a lot but in the long run it's less down time for the building and most cost effective.

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POLICE: DISPOSITION OF PROPERTY: *Mr. Mueller made the motion, at the recommendation of the Police Chief, to dispose of the property identified in the email sent from Chief Swaidner to the trustees dated June 12, 2025, entitled "GovDeals Items for Approval" as the items are not needed for public use, are obsolete, or are unfit for public use. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

POLICE: DISPOSITION OF PROPERTY: RESERVE: *Mr. Hare made the motion, at the request of the Police Chief, to set a reserve price of \$9,486.00 for the "2019 Ford Police Interceptor", approved for disposal on June 18, 2025, that price is the lower of the two value ranges provided as documentary evidence for the item's estimated value. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

ROAD DEPARTMENT: TRUCK PURCHASE: *Ms. Port asked the Fiscal Officer why the purchase order for the plow truck that was approved in March had still not been issued. Mrs. Walder updated the board that she had received approval to proceed without competitive bidding from the APA that morning and the purchase order was issued this afternoon.*

LARSEN PROPOSAL: AUTHORISED SIGNATORY: *Mr. Hare made the motion to retroactively authorize Kristina Port to act as Russell Township's authorized signatory for the Larsen Architects concept study for a Township Road Facility, dated March 28, 2025, and approved at the public meeting of June 5, 2025. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

RESOLUTION 2025-17: ADOPT RESERVE STUDY: *Mr. Hare made the motion to approve Resolution 2025-17: a resolution updating the established capital projects funds and adopting the 2025 Reserve Study. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

REAL PROP TAX EXEMPTION: COMMUNITY ROOM: *Mr. Hare made the motion to prepare the application document (DTE-23) for Real Property Tax Exemption for the Russell Township Community Room, 8501 Kinsman Road (Rear). Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

TAX EXEMPTION: AUTH SIG: *Mr. Hare made the motion to authorize Fiscal Officer Karen Walder to sign and execute the document necessary for the township's application for Real Property Tax Exemption for the Russell Township Community Room. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION #2: RESOLUTION 2025-18: This supplemental appropriation will include thirty eight hundred dollars in the general fund for gutters & downspouts on the administration building, seventy five hundred dollars in the general fund for a walkway at the Briar Hill Cemetery, twenty five thousand dollars in the general fund for the demolition of the Vilimas property, twelve hundred dollars in the road fund for uniform allowance for the new Road Superintendent, and forty six thousand dollars in the general fund building reserves for the roof and additional repairs on the administration building.

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Mr. Mueller made the motion to adopt the Supplemental Township Annual Appropriation #2, Resolution 2025-18, to provide for the current expenses and other expenditures of the Board of Trustees, for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2025, as recommended by the Fiscal Officer. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

SALARY SCHED #41: *Mr. Hare made the motion to adopt Salary Schedule 41, content approved June 18, and effective July 1, 2025. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

2026 BUDGET: POST BUDGET WORKSHOP: Ms. Port asked the Fiscal Officer if she had a recommendation for a levy amount for the Police Department this fall. Mrs. Walder noted that per her email to the Board and based on the assumptions set by the Board, that a levy of 3.3 mils would be needed. With modified assumptions on reserve funding and the timing of the detective hire, a levy of 2.5 mils is workable. Chief Swaidner advised the board that he will be able to hire a detective that is much needed, and he is comfortable putting a levy of no more than 2.5 mils. Chief Swaidner noted that he is good at budgeting and will make a 2.5 mil levy last for five years.

Officer Weaver entered the Town Hall and advised that due to the area being under a tornado warning, everyone needed to seek shelter immediately.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 9:27 p.m.

PURCHASE ORDERS AND BILLS WERE APPROVED AS ATTACHED.

Kristina Port, Chair

Karen Walder, Fiscal Officer

Recorded by: J. Dorka