

TOWN HALL

July 1, 2025

The meeting was called to order at 2:32 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: Police Chief Tom Swaidner, Road Superintendent Giovanni Maltese, Fire Chief John Frazier and Assistant Fire Chief Nick Sambula.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

MINUTES: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to accept the minutes of the Special Meeting held on June 5, 2025, as presented. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

Mr. Mueller made the motion to accept the minutes of the Special Meeting held on June 10, 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 June 12, 2025, as amended. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and the votes are as followed: Mr. Mueller yes; Mr. Hare yes; Ms. Port no, and the motion passed.

PUBLIC HEARING, 2026 BUDGET: *Mr. Hare made the motion to open the public hearing on the proposed budget for the year 2026. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

The Public Hearing opened at: 2:38 pm

There was discussion about adding help for the Road Department during the workshops but wasn't included in the post workshop budget. Ms. Port would like the Minutes to reflect that the Board discussed an assistant for the Road Department in 2026 on an as needed basis.

Mr. Mueller made the motion to close the public hearing on the proposed budget for the year 2026. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

The Public Hearing closed at: 2:44 pm

2026 BUDGET: *Mr. Hare made the motion to approve the proposed budget for the year 2026. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

ROAD DEPARTMENT: TRUCK UPDATE: Mr. Maltese stated that they took possession of the new truck yesterday. Will get the plow in about 90 days.

ROAD DEPARTMENT: Ms. Port asked Mr. Maltese about the well issues. Mr. Maltese stated that Aces Well Service came out and use a small charge to try and open the veins and pump it out but it's still not pumping out enough water. Stated they use bottled water for drinking, and the bathrooms work fine, but they can't wash more than one truck at a time.

Mr. Maltese stated that the guys have been keeping up with all the rain and have had no complaints about flooding or draining issues.

FIRE DORMITORY: LARSEN ARCHITECTS: Chief Frazier stated that JP Ptacek

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was not able to make it today and will have to schedule it for another meeting. He was going to give an update on dormitory project. Mr. Hare stated that the project

is now an additional \$5,500 higher than discussed and asked if a transfer needs to be made. Mrs. Walder suggested that the Board can address the price difference once we get the actual estimates in.

Mr. Mueller made the motion, based on the preliminary Larsen concept forwarded to the trustees via DropBox link on June 27, 2025, to request a proposal from Larsen Architects for architectural construction documents (drawings and specifications) for competitive bidding to construct the proposed Phase I Fire Station locker room & dormitory project. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

POLICE: VEHICLE PURCHASE: Chief Swaidner stated was supposed to purchase two new vehicles this year, but he is going defer the marked vehicle till next year. Chief Swaidner stated that he sent a quote to the trustees for an unmarked vehicle. The current unmarked vehicle is 10 years old and based on the reserve study there was a 10-year life expectancy. Buying an unmarked vehicle will save money since there is no upfitting.

Mr. Hare made the motion to approve the purchase of a 2025 Ford Police Interceptor for the amount of \$45,237.00 from Montrose Ford of Fairlawn, Ohio, cost of document fees and 30-day tag included, Order No. U182, quoted June 25, 2025, per the June 25, 2025, email to the Trustees from Chief Swaidner. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

AUTHORIZED SIGNATORY: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to authorize Karen Walder to act as authorized signatory for documents associated with the purchase of the 2025 Ford Police Interceptor from Montrose Ford of Fairlawn, Ohio. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

RESOLUTION 2025-20: CERTIFICATE OF NEED: POLICE DEPT LEVY: Chief Swaidner stated that there is a short fall for 2026 recommended cash reserve, which increases as time goes on. Chief Swaidner restated discussion at the budget workshop regarding an additional detective position. Looking out five years, Chief Swaidner advised that an addition of a detective is crucial to the department. He ran scenarios with the Fiscal Officer came up with a number that he is comfortable with, but noted at the end of the day, it will be our residents who will make the decision. It will be for continuing operational costs and the addition of a detective. Looking at an additional continuing levy for 2.5 mills. Mr. Mueller stated that residents are very pleased with the Police Department and noted it has been 8 years since the last Police Levy was approved by voters.

Mrs. Walder stated that she sent an email to the Board saying she had prepared a resolution for the 2.5 mill but if the Board wanted a different millage, it would have to done at a different meeting. She also noted that any levy would be subject to HB140, which requires information provided by the Township be informative, neutral and verifiable.

Mr. Mueller made the motion to approve Resolution 2025-20: A Resolution declaring it necessary to levy a tax in excess of the ten mill limitation. This levy is a continuing 2.5 mill additional levy for the Township Police Department. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

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ADMIN BUILDING: MK ROOFING: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to accept the township's standard agreement with vendor's proposals attached dated May 7, 2025 and May 8, 2025, to re-shingle the roof at the Administration Building and replace gutters and downspouts at the Administration Building by MK Roofing & Construction, of Middlefield, Ohio, for an amount of \$39,108.00, plus up to*

\$450.00 for decking allowance for a total cost of \$39,558.00, contract approved by the Geauga County Prosecutor. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

AUTHORIZED SIGNATORY: *Mr. Hare made the motion to authorize Kristina Port to act as authorized signatory for documents associated with the shingle roofing of the Administration Building by MK Roofing & Construction, proposal dated May 7, 2025. Mr. Muller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

Mr. Mueller stepped away at 3:15 pm.

AUTHORIZED SIGNATORY: *Mr. Hare made the motion to authorize Kristina Port to act as authorized signatory for documents associated with the gutter & downspout installation at the Administration Building by MK Roofing & Construction, proposal dated May 8, 2025. Ms. Port seconded the motion, and it passed.*

Mr. Mueller returned at 3:17 pm.

FACILITIES: Ms. Port stated that the landscape for the Community Room is still a work in progress with Rob Morgan.

Ms. Port stated that Mr. Wrench heard from Audimute and wanted to start installing this weekend, but Mr. Wrench asked to push it till Monday since it's a holiday weekend.

FISCAL OFFICE: Mrs. Walder welcomed Road Superintendent Mr. Maltese and stated that if there is anything he needs, the Fiscal Office is here to assist.

VILIMAS: PROPERTY TITLE SEARCH UPDATE: Mrs. Walder stated that she reached out to four title companies to quote the title search service and received three quotes back. The lowest estimate was for \$175 with Title Professionals out of Chardon. Mrs. Walder stated that the next step will be to get quotes for demo. Mrs. Palmer stated that she has some vendors for quotes.

TOWN HALL STUDY: CHESLER PROPOSAL: Mrs. Walder asked the trustees if they were ready to proceed with the Town Hall study. Stated that she did confirm with Mr. Chesler that the proposal from last year is still valid and will honor it as long as nothing gets added to the scope of the work. Ms. Port stated she went through the proposal and would like projects to be done in phases depending on money. Ms. Port believes the township should invest and maintain its historical aspects and does not want the building to fall into disrepair like the old Fire Station. Ms. Port would like some things taken care of before the bicentennial. Mr. Mueller would like to push it off for now and doesn't want to start multiple projects at once but stated to take care of small issues as they arise. Mr. Hare likes that it gives cost estimates for projects but agrees with Mr. Mueller with not spending all the money. Would like the financial issues with the Fire and Police Departments to be taken care of first. Mr. Mueller stated that the Town Hall is functional and doesn't believe anything needs to be done right now.

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BANK RECONCILIATION & FINANCIAL REPORTS: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to acknowledge receipt of the monthly bank reconciliation and financial reports for May 2025, as submitted by Fiscal Officer Karen Walder. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC WERE RECEIVED

PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING SERVICES/SOQs: Mrs. Palmer stated that the trustees are in a position to engage with an engineering firm. Stated we put legal ads in two newspapers, advertised for statements of qualifications from engineering firms on the website and Mr. Maltese reached out to engineering firms. Stated we ended up with one responsive engineering firm but typically need three. Spoke with APA and she said the trustees can only review what was received. Mr. Mueller asked who this engineering firm was, and Mrs. Palmer stated it was CT Consultants but just bought by Verdantas. Mrs. Palmer stated that the next step is to make it known they are the most qualified, although this is not a normal situation that we did not receive at least three quotes. After today's meeting, Mrs. Palmer stated that Mr. Maltese would ask Verdantas to provide a proposal.

There was some discussion on who was going to pay, and it was stated that it will come from the General Fund since this was a Township project, it just happens to be at the Road Department. There will be some cost savings because the Road Department has the proper equipment and can do some of the work.

Mr. Hare made the motion to select Verdantas, from the received SOQs, as the engineering firm determined to be most qualified to work with Russell Township for this annual professional engineering services appointment; the trustees acknowledge that the SOQ pool does not equal 3 or more but as the advertising efforts were published in two newspapers and on the township website, and personal outreach efforts were made to gain three firms, with generous advertising time allotted and clear instructions given, the outreach efforts for available firms are deemed to be good quality and thorough. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

PROFESSIONAL ARCHITECT SERVICES: *Mr. Hare made the motion to enter contract negotiations with Verdantas for the required professional engineering services on the MS4 Bioswale Project as Verdantas is the firm determined to be most qualified for this project by the Board of Trustees. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

TRUSTEE MEETING SCHEDULE: *Mr. Hare made the motion to approve the Trustee Regular Meeting Schedule for the remainder of 2025, indicating the future use of the new Community Room. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

4TH OF JULY PARADE: Ms. Port thanked the departments for volunteering to participate in the parade this week.

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

The meeting moved into executive session at 4:02 pm.

Item #1: Melissa Palmer & Giovanni Maltese

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In at 4:02 pm; out at 4:11 pm

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

The meeting was moved to regular session at 4:11 pm.

ROAD DEPARTMENT: RETIREMENT: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to accept the retirement of full-time Road Laborer IIIA Jack Garner from the employ of Russell Township, based on the letter addressed to the Trustees dated June 20,*

2025, retirement effective December 31, 2025. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

PURCHASE ORDERS AND BILLS WERE APPROVED AS ATTACHED.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 4:12 pm.

Kristina Port, Chair

Karen Walder, Fiscal Officer

Recorded by: J. Ezzone