

Community Room

September 4, 2025

The meeting was called to order at 2:01 p.m. by chairperson Port. Trustee Hare was present. The Board Administrator Melissa Palmer was present and Fiscal Officer Karen Walder was present via Teams.

The following Department Heads were present: Police Chief Tom Swaidner, Road Superintendent Giovanni Maltese and Fire Chief John Frazier were present. Asst. Fire Chiefs Sambula and Brown were present. Zoning Secretary Bonnie Guyer was present.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

MINUTES: *Mr. Hare made the motion to accept the minutes of the Regular Meeting held on August 7, 2025, as presented. Ms. Port seconded the motion, and it passed.*

Mr. Mueller joined the meeting at 2:04 pm.

FIRE DEPT: Asst. Fire Chief Brown stated that they did 24-hour service at the Geauga Fair, with 8 hours for Fire Protection on Friday 8 hours of EMS on Sunday morning and then because there were some issues with staffing, they were asked to come back on Monday evening. They saw 12 patients total, 4 being transported with one of them with a traumatic injury from bull riding. Stated he appreciates the Township's support as the Fire Department provides care to the broader community and stated its great experience for the newer members in a high-paced environment.

LARSEN: FIRE DORMITORY: Chief Frazier stated that a much more detailed drawing has been submitted by Larsen and includes all specifications. James Ptacek from Larsen Architects gave a quick update on the drawings and the scope of the work. It will be inclusive for all employees by adding extra dormitory space. Stated the next step is for the Board to approve the plans and then go out for bid.

Mrs. Walder asked if any materials were not included in the scope of work and Mr. Ptacek said bedding and any loose furniture was not included in the scope. Chief Frazier stated that they can reuse the bunks but may need new mattresses.

Mr. Mueller made the motion to approve the plans as presented by James Ptacek, Larsen Architects, in a letter dated August 29, 2025 to Chief Frazier, and copied to the Township Trustees, for the Russell Township Phase I Fire Locker Room & Dormitory Project, and orders that the project be let for bid. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

LARSEN: GARAGE DESIGN OPTIONS: Mr. Ptacek discussed a few garage design options for the Road Department. Two of the options presented were based on the location just south of the existing Police Department, which does carry some wetlands designation. Mr. Ptacek explained some issues with building the new building at this site, such as not enough space for trucks to turn around, noise for residents that live to the west or a concern for overnight access for those adjacent households and depending on how they relocate fuel there may be issues with the deed restrictions. There is no room to move the salt dome to this location.

Mr. Ptacek discussed the option of the Road Department staying at the current location. This option would involve a tear down of the current structure and rebuilding the new structure in its place, a process expected to take six to eight months. Mr. Ptacek said if the existing garage is to remain as is, there would be a fair amount of reinvestment that has to be made to keep it up and running to function as storage. A new structure would hold the plows, and this would give the Police full access to the shooting range without having to move anything in and out. Mr. Ptacek said that keeping the building in the current location has the fewest cons, other than Police and Fire having to come down for gas but they are currently doing that. Mrs. Walder

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asked about the size of the proposed new building versus the building that would be razed. Mr. Ptacek stated it is just under 24,000 sq. ft for the main building and around 1,500 sq. ft. for the office space and the current building is around 8,000 sq. ft. Mr. Mueller asked where they would be working while under construction, and Mr. Ptacek suggested rental of trailers and storage containers if needed for equipment. Mrs. Walder asked about preliminary planning for costs and Mr. Ptacek said he has not yet done that. A current project they are working on that is pre-engineered metal is about \$120-\$140 sq. ft. for the shell. Next step would be to figure out costs.

MS4 BIOSWALE PROPOSAL: Mr. Maltese stated he just received a message from Verdantas and everything with the agreement is worked out with the APA and the APA will send the final contract to him and Mrs. Palmer. Once the contract is approved, Verdantas can start the design.

CENTERRA: UPDATE: Mr. Maltese stated he received a quote for the electrical upgrade from Portman Electric for \$6,500. This includes doing all the explosion proof conduit and everything that must be done to upgrade the electric service to allow the pumps to be installed on top of the tanks. The good news is the current tanks are good, and the Township doesn't have to get new tanks.

Mr. Maltese stated for Centerra there is a \$150 initial setup fee, and they will install and maintain the pumps as long as Centerra is supplying the fuel. It's \$60/month to pull reports from the cloud.

Mr. Maltese advised the Trustees that the current fuel system is not recording anyone getting fuel, so all departments have to track it manually.

Mrs. Palmer asked Mr. Maltese to send Mrs. Walder a copy of Portman Electric's proposal. Mrs. Walder stated that she has been in contact with Centerra about terms and conditions and is waiting for additional information so she can send it to the APA.

HILLBROOK SOUTH UPDATE: Mr. Maltese stated he talked to Chagrin River Watershed Partners, and it doesn't qualify for any grants because it's not public land. An eSid would need one property owner to sign an agreement. Mr. Maltese stated that there is no more erosion on the Township end, it's more on the State Route 87 end. Mr. Maltese stated he approached the property owner that lives at the top of Hillbrook regarding placing dirt there for stabilization. Mr. Maltese stated that the road hasn't moved since they opened the one lane and they check it daily. He also noted that the Engineer's office is looking for emergency funding, for which the township would fund 20% but hasn't heard if they have applied yet.

2025 RESURFACING PROJECT: Mr. Maltese stated that the paving project has been completed but hasn't seen any paperwork yet. There is one water hole that they need to address and sent it over to the Engineer.

TRUCK PAINT ESTIMATE: Mr. Maltese stated he is working on the insurance claim with OTARMA. Stated that he is waiting for someone from South Russell Police Department to give him a copy of the report for insurance. The estimate for repair was \$2,305.59, which is mostly cosmetic.

CITIZEN'S POLICE ACADEMY: DEBRIEF: Chief Swaidner stated they have done two weeks and seems like everyone is enjoying it. The thought process behind starting this was to continue to build that relationship with the community and give them a platform to learn about the Police Department. Next week, the group is going to take a tour at Geauga Safety Center and then the following week the First Department will be providing a First Aid CPR course.

POSITION DESCRIPTION: POLICE DETECTIVE: Chief Swaidner stated they didn't have a job description that would outline what the responsibilities of the

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detective would be. He has been working with Clemens Nelson, and they provided a job description that meets the same format as the rest of the Township's job descriptions.

Mr. Hare made the motion to adopt the position description prepared by Clemens Nelson for full-time Police Detective, effective September 4, 2025. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

ZONING RESOLUTION UPDATE: Mrs. Guyer stated that the Zoning Commission approved the amendments to the zoning resolution book on August 27th and it was delivered to the Planning Commission on August 28th. It will be on the Zoning Commission's agenda for their meeting on September 9th. Mrs. Guyer stated that a Public Hearing is scheduled for September 24th, with the ability for the public to view the amended resolution book between September 9th-24th from 9:00 am – 3:00 pm in the Zoning Office. After September 24th Public Hearing, the resolution will go to the Board of Trustees.

POSITION DESCRIPTION: ASST ZONING INSPECTOR: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to adopt the position description for part-time Assistant Zoning Inspector, with the hourly pay range of \$20.00 – 23.00, effective September 4, 2025. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

CJ LANDSCAPE: Mrs. Palmer stated that there was an error from the last meeting and just wanted to clarify that for CJ Landscape to cleanup at the Recycling Center it is \$60/hour.

STAFF TRAINING: Mrs. Palmer just gave a reminder that there is staff training on September 9th and 10th for the Administration Building and Road Department for Stop the Bleed and CPR.

FLAGS: Ms. Dorka stated that she called The Flag Store about new flags for the flagpole on the corner because the current one is badly ripped. Asked the trustees if it would be okay to take the flag down until the new one comes in and they agreed that was fine.

AUTHORIZED SIGNATORY: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to authorize Kristina Port to act as signatory on behalf of the Board of Trustees on the Geauga County Board of Elections form acknowledging that the Russell Township Board of Trustees has received and reviewed the ballot language for Issue 13, the 2.5 mill continuing levy for Russell Township, on the November 4, 2025, ballot. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

VILIMAS UPDATE: Mrs. Walder stated the issue she is having is how to deal with the abandoned vehicles because they are outside of the demolition Resolution. Mrs. Walder asked the Board how they would like to proceed with this issue. Mrs. Walder stated she needs direction so she can finish the scope of work with the demolition company. Mr. Mueller stated he will contact Mr. Drain to tell them they need to remove the vehicles from the property. Mr. Hare suggests that our APA contacts Mr. Drain to protect Russell Township's interests. Mr. Mueller stated that he will call Mr. Drain and get documentation.

RESOLUTION 2025-23: *Mr. Hare made the motion to adopt the Rate Resolution accepting the amounts and rates as determined by the Budget Commission and authorizing the necessary tax levies and certifying them to the County Auditor, as recommended by the Fiscal Officer. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

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FISCAL OFFICE: Mrs. Walder stated that she had a meeting with Oswald regarding the 2026 benefits. Stated that medical will see no changes for 2026 as the Township is in year 2 of the 2-year agreement. Dental, vision, and life insurance are up for renewal, and she received notification that dental insurance would increase \$1,400 for the township for 2026. There is no change to vision or life insurance.

Mrs. Walder stated that the Administration Building roof has been completed and thanked Mrs. Ezzone for coordinating the project.

Mrs. Walder thanked Ms. Dorka for setting up the Teams meeting for today's meeting.

Mrs. Walder stated that the application form for tax exemption has been submitted for the Community Room.

Mrs. Walder stated that she is working on a supplemental for the October meeting and asked the Department Heads to let her know if they have any projects that are not under current appropriations.

CYBERSECURITY ADOPTION: REPORTING: Mrs. Walder stated that 9.64D requires mandatory reporting and that provision takes effect September 30th. The request is for the Board to identify who is responsible for making the notification to Homeland Security and Auditor of State. Mrs. Walder stated that departments that are under ADP already have those notifications requirements covered because any cyber incident that affects us would affect ADP. Reporting requirements would be for departments that aren't under ADP: Fire and Police Department. The Trustees will put some thought into this and will continue discussion at next meeting.

CYBEROHIO GRANT: SUBRECIPIENT INFO FORM: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to authorize Karen Walder to electronically sign and submit the CyberOhio Grant Subrecipient Information Form on behalf of the Russell Township Board of Trustees. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC WERE RECEIVED

OPIOID SETTLEMENTS: PURDUE PHARMA & SACKLER FAMILY: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to approve the Purdue Pharma and Sackler National Opioid Settlement Participation Form & to authorize Kristina Port to act as signatory for the associated Purdue/Sackler Settlement Notice, Participation Form and Release, due September 30, 2025. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

OPIOID SETTLEMENTS: SECONDARY SETTLEMENTS: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to approve executing the Secondary Manufacturers Settlements (Alvogen, Amneal, Apotex, Hikma, Indivior, Mylan, Sun, and Zydus) & to authorize Kristina Port to act as signatory for the Combined Participation Form, due October 8, 2025. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

ACOUSTIC PANELS: AUDIMUTE: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to accept the quote for the Community Room/Conference Room Solution for 6 acoustic panels, door absorption sheet, tape sealant door kit, and installation from Audimute Sound Management Solutions, of Bedford Heights, Ohio, quote #331307, dated August 29, 2025, for an amount of \$3,482.00. Mr. Hare seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

OPEN HOUSE: There was a brief discussion on possible dates to have an open house of the new Community Room. The tentative date is November 15th.

FAIRMOUNT FINE ARTS CENTER: USE OF COMMUNITY ROOM: There was discussion on whether to charge Fairmount Fine Arts Center for using the Community Room. Ms. Dorka stated that they have asked to use the Community Room for Board meetings and to host a luncheon for the West Geauga Chamber of Commerce in mid-

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October. Fairmount Center has potential for other programs that could utilize the Community Room. Mr. Mueller would like to help them out as much as possible, but concerns were raised if you give one organization the Community Room for free you can't tell others they have to pay then. Ms. Dorka noted that groups may request use of the Town Hall at no charge. Mrs. Palmer stated that when she did the grant for the Community Room, she included as potential events the Fairmount Center having art shows or dance recitals that the community could attend. Mr. Mueller stated he will look into what events the Fairmount Center has in mind, and they will discuss at another meeting.

BOARD OF ELECTIONS: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to authorize Kristina Port to execute the Contract for November 4, 2025 Election Day Polling Location with the Geauga County Board of Elections. Mr. Hare seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

FACILITIES: TOWN HALL USE: *Mr. Hare made the motion to grant permission for the Geauga County Board of Elections to use the Town Hall from 5:30 am – 9:00 pm, on November 4, 2025, subject to Township rules and regulations. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

GEAUGA SAFETY COUNCIL: ATTENDEE: Ms. Port stated that she can attend the luncheon on September 12th.

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 4:14 pm.

*Item #1: Melissa Palmer & Chief John Frazier
In at 3:47 pm; out at 4:08 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 4:25 pm.

ROAD DEPT: NEW HIRE: *Mr. Hare made the motion to hire Ryan Carter as a full-time Road Laborer, Class IIC, at the starting rate of \$27.55 per Salary Schedule 41, pending his acceptance, acceptable results of the drug test and pending completion of all paperwork with the Fiscal Office, a one-year probation will begin on the official starting date of November 1, 2025. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

FIRE DEPT: RESIGNATION: *Mr. Hare made the motion to accept the resignation of Anthony Mariola from the employment of Russell Township, effective immediately per his letter dated August 19, 2025. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

FIRE DEPARTMENT PARAMEDIC: *Mr. Hare made the motion to approve a revised retroactive starting date of July 21, 2021 for Mr. Christian Loucka's advancement from EMT to part-time Paramedic due to his successful completion of the Paramedic Program. New pay scale, starting date, & experience level for Mr. Loucka will be based on the July 21, 2021 start date. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

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FIRE DEPARTMENT PARAMEDIC: *Mr. Hare made the motion to approve a revised retroactive starting date of August 16, 2025, for Mr. John Argie's advancement from EMT to part-time Paramedic due to his successful completion of the Paramedic Program. New pay scale, starting date, & experience level for Mr. Argie will be based on the August 16, 2025 start date. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

ZONING DEPT: NEW HIRE: *Mr. Hare made the motion to hire Frank Kolk as the part-time Assistant Zoning Inspector, at the rate of \$23.00, pending his acceptance, acceptable results of the FBI/BCI background check, and pending completion of all paperwork with the Fiscal Office; a one-year probation will begin on the official starting date of September 16, 2025. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.*

COMMUNITY ROOM: CELL SIGNAL: *Mr. Mueller made the motion to approve the plan to improve the cell phone signal in the Community Room with the purchase of a cell phone repeater kit and related equipment from Just Add Tech, proposal #858, for an amount of \$2,950.00, pending approval by ADP, and pending removal or negotiation of initial deposit term. Mr. Hare 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 unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 pm.

Kristina Port, Chair

Karen Walder, Fiscal Officer

Recorded by: J. Ezzone