

TOWN HALL

February 1, 2024

The meeting was called to order at 2:01 p.m. by chairperson Port. Trustees Rambo was present. Trustee Mueller joined at 2:02 p.m. The Board Administrator Melissa Palmer and the 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 January 9, 2024, as presented. Mr. Rambo seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

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

ANNUAL REPORTS: *Mr. Rambo made the motion to acknowledge receipt of the 2023 annual reports from the Fire, Police, Road, Facilities, & Zoning Departments. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

GUEST: JEFF HEINRICH, NOPEC GAS OPT-IN: Mr. Heinrich stated that the gas opt-in right now is not the same as electric, where you can opt-in and out frequently. Once you opt-out for gas you have to wait for the next gas cycle, which could be a couple of months before you could opt-in again. Mr. Heinrich stated that the Trustees could pass a resolution to allow the residents to opt-in and opt-out of gas as needed. Mr. Heinrich stated that 2 public hearings would be needed, with at least 2 weeks' notice. The hearings would give residents the opportunity to ask any questions. After the 2nd hearing the Trustees can pass a resolution to allow the residents easier access to opting in and out for gas. The Trustees agreed to go forward with this program.

ZONING: SEWER TIE-IN CAPACITY: Mr. Wrench stated that there is no update at this time regarding the sewer tie-ins. Stated he is still working with Nick Gorris from Geauga County Water Resources. Mr. Wrench stated that zoning permits will not be issued until he receives a letter from Mr. Gorris giving approval.

REQUEST FOR USE OF TOWN HALL: *Mr. Rambo made the motion to grant permission for the Deer Lake Homeowner's Association to use the Town Hall on May 14, 2024, from 6 pm to 9 pm, subject to Township rules, regulations, and continued availability. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

TOWNSHIP PROPERTY: BOB HALL FIELD: *Mr. Rambo made the motion to grant permission for the West Geauga Baseball Federation to use Bob Hall Field from April 1, 2024 - through July 19, 2024, with certificate of liability insurance currently on file & to be renewed upon expiration, subject to Township rules and regulations, and subject to continued availability. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

AUTHORIZED SIGNATORY: GTSWMD DIG GRANT: Mr. Wrench stated that the grant application is due tomorrow. The grant would be used toward getting a gate installed at the recycling center.

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Mr. Mueller made the motion to authorize Kristina Port to act as Russell Township's authorized signatory for the Drop-off Improvement Grant (DIG) 2024 application, dated February 1, 2024, to Geauga Trumbull Solid Waste Management Dist. Mr. Rambo seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

CLE FOUNDATION/UHLIN GRANT: *Mr. Mueller made the motion, based on the Fiscal Officer's recommendation, that the Board of Trustees accepts the grant from the Philip R. Uhlir Fund at the Cleveland Foundation of \$4,000.00 for general support for the Russell Police Department. Mr. Rambo seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

Mr. Mueller made the motion to approve the use of the \$4,000.00 grant for general support for the Russell Township Police Department at the discretion of the Police Chief. Mr. Rambo seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

POLICE DEPT: Ms. Port asked Chief Swaidner about getting permanent speed trackers placed throughout the Township. Chief Swaidner stated that he would look into prices. Chief Swaidner said the best spot for one would probably be by the school because people don't always pay attention to the school zone. Chief Swaidner likes having the speed trailer because he is able to move it throughout the Township as needed.

MILEAGE CERTIFICATION: *Mr. Rambo made the motion to certify that Russell Township, as of December 31, 2023, was responsible for maintaining 55.455 miles of public roads. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

ROAD: VEHICLE PURCHASE: 2023 FORD F-150: Mr. Layne asked the Board to consider approval of the purchase of a 2023 Ford F-150 to replace the 2013 Honda Ridgeline. Mr. Layne stated that going with a 2023 will be cheaper and was offered a government discount of \$3,600. Mr. Layne stated he will be putting the Ridgeline on GovDeals for no less than \$5,000. Mr. Layne stated that he would be keeping this new truck for at least 10 years. Mr. Layne stated that another benefit of this truck is it will have a bigger bed for hauling and will be more versatile for the Road Department's needs.

Mr. Layne stated that it is in his budget but can't purchase it till permanent appropriations are in. Mr. Layne is seeking approval from the Trustees to have Preston Ford hold this truck for purchase, without putting money down, until permanents are in. All 3 Trustees give Mr. Layne approval to request the hold of the 2023 Ford F-150.

FIRE: DONATION: *Mr. Rambo made the motion, based on the Fiscal Officer's recommendation, to accept the donation from Paul & Teri Szucs of \$100.00 to the Fire Department. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

Mr. Mueller made the motion to approve the use of the \$100.00 donation for the Fire Department at the discretion of the Fire Chief. Ms. Port seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

FIRE DEPT: Ms. Port asked Chief Frazier for an update on the fire study. Board Administrator stated that an engagement letter is supposed to be coming and Chief Frazier stated that the Board will need to sign it.

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CLEARGOV UPDATE: Mrs. Walder thanked the departments for attending the Zoom call and gave a kudos to the Fire Department for being the first to enter their capital projects. Mrs. Walder stated that they are utilizing the comments feature and urges the Trustees to log in to view those. Mrs. Walder asked the Board to review the General Fund projects and designate someone who will be entering them into ClearGov. Ms. Port volunteered to take this task on.

INVESTMENT UPDATE: Mrs. Walder stated that Meeder Public Funds will have an increase in their fees that will take effect April 1st and will have an agreement for the next Trustee meeting. Our fees have not changed since starting with their advisory services in 2018. Mrs. Walder stated that it looks like it will go from an average of \$650 a month to \$835 a month. The Township invests roughly \$8 million.

CIRCLE K GAS CARD: Mrs. Walder said since there was an issue with the gas and diesel pumps during the cold spell, this led to looking into a gas card through Circle K. These cards would be used as a backup in case there was an issue again with the gas pumps. Mrs. Walder asked the Board if this something they would like her to pursue with the application and have agreed. Mrs. Walder checked that gas cards are exempt from the credit card policy, so the Department Heads can hold onto these cards at their office. Stated that we would be billed monthly and be broken out by department based on which cards were used. The Trustees are in favor of proceeding with the application.

The Board Administrator asked if there would be a benefit in upgrading the pumps and Mr. Layne stated that it would be an expensive fix and should be looked at in conjunction with discussions for a new Road Department building.

OHIO TOWNSHIP DAY: Mrs. Walder stated that February 1 is Ohio Township Day and gave some historical facts about the township form of government.

UAN EMAIL: Mrs. Walder stated that the Trustees probably received an email notice from UAN indicating that we have not completed a bank reconciliation in 60 days. That is an option the Fiscal Office enabled to alert the Board of that situation. Mrs. Walder stated that in this case we have not completed the December bank reconciliation because that is part of the step-by-step process of the year-end closing, which is planned to be done next week.

PROPOSAL: OHIO BUILDERS RISK POLICY PROPOSAL: *Mr. Rambo made the motion to approve the proposal, dated January 24, 2024, from Mitsui Sumitomo Insurance Company of America, as recommended by Burnham & Flower Agency, Inc., for the Ohio Builders Risk Policy, with the term premium of \$4,879.81, as required for the Community Building construction project. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

Mr. Mueller stepped away at 3:03 pm.

NOPEC ENERGIZED COMMUNITY RESOLUTION: Mrs. Walder stated that for this year's energy saving projects we have been awarded \$13,167 and we have a carryover balance of \$6,383.56 from 2023. Each year we have a resolution to participate in the program.

Mr. Rambo made the motion to adopt Resolution 2024-2, a resolution authorizing all actions necessary to accept the NOPEC 2024 Energized Community Grant. Ms.

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Port seconded and the motion passed.

NOPEC ENERGIZED COMMUNITY SIGNATORY: *Mr. Rambo made the motion to authorize Fiscal Officer Karen Walder to act as Russell Township's Local Contact and authorized signatory for the 2024 NOPEC Energized Community grant agreement and portal system. Ms. Port seconded the motion and it passed.*

Mr. Mueller stepped back at 3:05 pm.

COMMUNITY BUILDING: PREVAILING WAGE COORDINATOR: Ms. Port stated that she looked at what the duties and logistics were, and she recommends that the Fiscal Officer assigns a staff member to be the prevailing wage coordinator. She said since the construction is happening at the Administration building and it's dealing with payroll, she thinks it's best for someone in Fiscal Office to be the coordinator. Mrs. Walder stated that she will look into the request to see if it is permitted under statutes.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC WERE RECEIVED

NOPEC COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP: The Board Administrator stated that she will be applying for NOPEC Community Grant funds and would like to get dates and how much money would be needed for the groundbreaking ceremony and open house of the new community building. Trustees agree to March 1st for the groundbreaking ceremony and Mr. Rambo suggested November 1st for the open house. The Board Administrator suggested that there be some food and beverages at each event and will submit for funds.

CANNABIS RESOLUTION: The Trustees are in favor of doing a resolution and will put this on for the next Trustee meeting for approval.

WEBSITE: Board Administrator stated that she had a quick discussion with Mr. Mueller regarding this topic. Mr. Mueller asked who was going to do the website, and she stated that ADP recommended Company 119 and that's who she plans on going with. The Board Administrator has not met with Company 119 but has reviewed their products and it's outstanding.

2024 PROJECT PLANNER: Ms. Port stated that the Board Administrator sent out a project planner and she has added a couple more projects. COOP, which is continuity of operations planning, was added. Stated that it is an analysis of what hazards the Township may face and needs a plan in place on how to be able to complete township operational tasks if an emergency happens. The Board Administrator stated that she has a template to work off. Mr. Mueller stated that he has an interest in working on this project.

LEADERSHIP GEUGA YOUTH INSTITUTE: Ms. Port stated that they received an email from Chesterland suggesting the Township help sponsor 2 students for the Leadership Geauga Youth Institute. It is \$300 per student to participate in the program. The Trustees think this is a great opportunity and will take action once they receive the paperwork.

SENIOR SCRAP PICK-UP/DROP-OFF: Board Administrator stated that it is time to start planning for the Senior Scrap Day. Stated this event will be in September again. She stated that she requested a cost estimate but has not received it yet.

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

The meeting moved into executive session at 3:42 pm.

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

The meeting moved to regular session at 4:16 pm.

PURCHASE ORDERS AND BILLS WERE APPROVED AS ATTACHED.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 4:16 pm.

Kristina Port, Chair

Karen Walder, Fiscal Officer

Recorded by: J. Ezzone