

TOWN HALL

December 1, 2021

The Chair, Ms. Port, called the meeting to order at 2:57 pm. Trustee Gabram and Trustee Mueller were present. Trustee Assistant Melissa Palmer was present and Fiscal Officer Karen Walder was present.

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

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

**FIRE:** Ms. Port asked Chief Frazier regarding the salary overage for the Fire Department if this was going to be an ongoing issue or more of a onetime issue. Chief Frazier stated that there were 3 areas that were affected in 2021. Chief Frazier stated that there were 10 changes in the personnel availability for this year and created a lot of gaps. There were 9 personnel in training and added to the cost. Chief Frazier stated that there were a few raises this year that would affect the overall amount. Some of the younger personnel have graduated from the paramedic training and that causes change in employee's rates.

Mr. Mueller brought up hiring 2 full-time paramedics the first of the year. Mr. Mueller would like to move ahead with this. Ms. Port asked Mrs. Walder to look at her schedule when she is back in town so they can set up a meeting with Chief Frazier to discuss. Mrs. Walder suggested that the Township reaches out to our HR council to review pay scales, benefits, pension contributions, collective bargaining impact, and shift hours in order to advise the Board.

**ROAD:** Mr. Layne stated that ODOT township stimulus application has successfully been submitted with the assistance of the Geauga County Engineer and Mrs. Palmer. Mr. Layne stated they applied for \$250,000 and should know soon if we have been approved.

**FACILITIES:** Mr. Wrench stated that the demolition contractors are over at the Old Fire Station today. Mr. Wrench stated that there is a schedule and are planning to start demo on Monday December 6<sup>th</sup>. The recycling center has been closed and will reopen on December 20<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Gabram stated that everything is ready for demolition and they are currently taking anything out that is not salvageable.

Mr. Gabram stated that the well is fixed at the Town Hall. Mr. Gabram stated that the pump got stuck but were able to get it out.

**ZONING:** Mr. Wrench stated that for the upcoming BZA meeting, there are a couple of variances on the agenda. Mr. Wrench stated that this time of year is good for filing and get in good inspections before spring. Mr. Wrench appreciated Mr. Detrich helping in the Zoning Department while he was on leave.

Mr. Mueller stated he received a call requesting 2 additional bullet points on a building application: Is there an HOA where you live and if so, have you contacted them regarding what you are building. Mrs. Palmer stated that she consulted with the prosecutor regarding this and she said absolutely not a good idea to put it on the Township's form because it would imply we have some responsibilities to HOA's and the HOA's are responsible for conveying their own rules and on their deeds. Ms. Port suggested we can post something educational on the website regarding HOA's. Mrs. Palmer will work with Mr. Wrench on this.

Mr. Wrench stated that the BZA is looking for another board member for 2022. Mrs. Palmer stated that she has advertised that in the newspapers, on the website and Facebook. Applications are due December 29<sup>th</sup> by noon and for the remaining term for Matt Rambo; expiring term of December 31, 2025.

**POLICE:** Chief Swaidner reported that their food drive ended last month and transferred all the items to the Geauga County Department of Job and Family Services and disbursed through the county for Thanksgiving. Currently have the toy drive that will end at the end of this week. Those items will be taken to Geauga County Department of Job and Family Services and disbursed through the county.

**STORAGE BLDG: ADDENDUMS:** *Mr. Gabram made the motion to grant Trustee Kristina Port authority to review and approve the Storage Building project addendums for TC Architects. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

**FISCAL OFFICE:** Mrs. Walder officially welcome back Jessica Ezzone back from maternity leave and congratulations on the birth of her daughter.

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**FO QUARTERLY REPORT:** Mrs. Walder stated for the 3<sup>rd</sup> the Township was at or over 100% of our budgeted revenue for the General Fund, Gas Tax, Road and Bridge, Police, and Fire Funds. Mrs. Walder stated that our revenue Certificate also had \$152,000 for FEMA Grant, which was not received this year. We were approved for the grant but will need to recertify that revenue in 2022 when we do Permanent Appropriations. The Township has received just over \$272,000 in ARP funding but have not appropriated any for 2021 and have not included any in Temporary Appropriations for 2022. Mrs. Walder stated we have returned to collecting recycling revenue for our tonnage and have collected \$727 for the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter.

Mr. Gabram stated that the Police Department will be getting their 3.25% raise as of January 1 as part of their bargaining agreement and asked how the numbers were coming along for the rest of the township employees. Mrs. Walder stated that back in June, the Board discussed extending that raise to all employees. The 3.25% raise was approved in the 2022 budget submission and has been included in Temporary Appropriations. Mr. Mueller suggests for the rest of the township employees to base the increase on an average. Ms. Port and Mr. Gabram agree to continue to extend parity for the employees.

**TEMPORARY APPROPRIATIONS 2022:** Mrs. Walder stated this is based on the Certificate of Estimated Resources we receive from the Budget Commission as part of our 2022 budget.

*Mr. Gabram made the motion to adopt the Temporary Township Annual Appropriation Resolution 2021-33 for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2022. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

**MEDICAL BENEFITS RENEWAL:** Mrs. Walder summarized the challenges in securing quotes for major medical coverage in 2022 due to our experience rating in 2021. Five companies declined to quote. Our current provider, Medical Mutual offered two proposals: a 33.7% increase for our current HRA5000 plan, or a 21.2% increase if we move to their HRA6750 plan. The new plan would offer the exact same benefits but carry a higher deductible of \$6,750 for individual and \$13,500 for families. Mrs. Walder reminded the Board that the 2022 Budget factored in a 20% increase to major medical premium costs. The Board discussed the various options and potential impact on employees, the Township budget and the bargaining units. Mrs. Walder recommended that the Board opt for the HRA6750 plan, but to maintain the Township's HRA funding at the current \$5000/\$10000 level (the Township would cover 74% of the deductible with the employee responsible for the balance).

**ANNUAL INSURANCE "OPTION B W/\$5,000":** *Mr. Gabram made the motion to approve the following Insurance coverage for Russell Township officials and full-time employees for the year 2022: Health – Med Mut SuperMed PPO HRA6750 AND for the Board of Trustees to approve the township funding of the HRA at the \$5,000/individual & \$10,000/family level for the year 2022. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

**EMPLOYEE CONTRIBUTION:** *Mr. Mueller made the motion to continue the 15% employee contribution amount toward the Russell Township Benefit insurance package. Mr. Gabram seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

**INSURANCE:** *Mr. Gabram made the motion to approve the following insurance benefits for Russell Township officials and full-time employees for the year 2022:*  
*Health Insurance – Medical Mutual HRA 6750*  
*Life Insurance – Principle Financial*  
*Dental – Dental Care Plus Group, 12 months*  
*Vision – PHI VSP Option #4, 12 months.*  
*Mr. Mueller seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

**AUTHORIZATION FOR FO:** *Mr. Gabram made the motion to authorize the Fiscal Officer to execute the agreements for Medical Mutual insurance coverage and the HRA funding by the township for 2022 on behalf of the Russell Township Board of Trustees. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

*Mr. Mueller made the motion to authorize the Fiscal Officer to execute the agreements for Dental Care Plus Group and PHI VSP insurance coverage for 2022 on behalf of the Russell Township Board of Trustees. Mr. Gabram seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

*Mr. Gabram made the motion to acknowledge receipt of the third quarter 2021 Fiscal Office report from the Russell Township Fiscal Officer. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

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**SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS:** *Mr. Mueller made the motion to adopt the Supplemental Township Annual Appropriation Resolution 2021-34 to provide for the additional sums (SUPPL #5 \$50,000.00) to be set aside and appropriated in FUND 2281, "Fire and Rescue, Ambulance & EMS Service," for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2021, as recommended by the Fiscal Officer. Mr. Gabram seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

**COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC WERE RECEIVED**

**IT IMPROVEMENTS:** *Mrs. Palmer stated after their Zoom meeting with Kris from Simvay, they are still waiting on a proposal. Mrs. Palmer wasn't sure where the Police or Fire Department if they were interested in participating in a unified portal like Simvay proposed and Chief Frazier stated he was interested if there was money in his budget for it. Chief Swaidner stated he was interested as well and offered to use the Police Department's server room if it agrees with LEADS policy. Mrs. Palmer stated she will reach out to Kris to get some proposals sent over.*

**2022 MEETING SCHEDULE:** *Tabled till the Organizational Meeting on January 5, 2022.*

**CRWP 2022 MEMBERSHIP DUES:** *Mr. Gabram made the motion to approve the 2022 membership dues expense of \$3,759.00 for the Chagrin River Watershed Partners, Inc. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

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

The meeting moved into executive session at 4:35 pm.

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

The meeting moved into regular session at 5:18 pm.

**VACATION BUYBACK:** *Mr. Mueller made the motion to accept the Memorandum of Understanding, signed on November 23, 2021 by local OPBA representative Michael McIvor to approve payment for the equivalent of 120 hours of vacation for employee Vincent A. Valerio. Mr. Gabram seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

*Mr. Mueller made the motion to approve payment for the equivalent of 80 hours of vacation for employee Ben Kimball. Mr. Gabram seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

**FIRE DEPT HIRE:** *Mr. Gabram made the motion to hire Mr. Daniel Ostroske as a Firefighter/EMT at the beginning rate of \$16.85 per hour, per Salary Schedule 34, effective January 1, 2022, pending the completion of all paperwork with the Fiscal Officer. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

**PURCHASE ORDERS AND BILLS WERE APPROVED AS ATTACHED.**

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

The meeting was adjourned at 5:20 pm.

Kristina Port, Chair

Karen Walder, Fiscal Officer

Recorded by: J. Ezzone