

May 5, 2026

To: Russell Township Board of Trustees

Under Ohio law, the Board of Township Trustees—not the Fiscal Officer—holds sole authority over the township’s budget, tax policy, and the decision to place levies before voters. The Fiscal Officer, as a separately elected office, has significant responsibilities including maintaining accurate records, fulfilling public records requests, certifying available funds, and ensuring that expenditures comply with lawful appropriations. The direction of the township’s finances, however, rests entirely with the Board.

I have watched with growing concern as the Board has struggled to exercise that responsibility with the level of discipline, transparency, and fiscal judgment that taxpayers have a right to expect. Despite years of strong and consistent financial support from residents, the township has accumulated a substantial level of unencumbered cash carryover. In my view, this reflects a failure to adequately plan, prioritize, and responsibly manage taxpayer dollars.

This pattern is continuing. Approved spending for 2026 and early indications for the 2027 budget point to increased expenditures without sufficient justification, limited scrutiny of departmental requests, and a lack of focus on efficiency or returning excess funds to taxpayers. A bottom-up budgeting approach has taken hold that prioritizes government expansion over taxpayer interests and long-term sustainability.

I have raised concerns, offered recommendations, and sought more substantive engagement by the Board. Those efforts have not resulted in meaningful change. Instead, I am faced with interference, allegations, a barrage of public records requests, public misstatements regarding township finances resulting in the need to correct the record for our residents, and other demands attempting to limit my voice and disrupt my ability to fulfil my statutory duties. This environment has undermined the effective functioning of my office and my ability to work cooperatively with our departments and the Board of Trustees.

Under these conditions, I am unable to carry out the duties of Fiscal Officer in a manner that meets my obligations to the residents of Russell Township. Accordingly, I hereby resign my position, effective June 5, 2026, at midnight.

It has been an honor to serve this community for the past eight years and to safeguard its financial resources. Our residents deserve leadership that places taxpayer interests first and I encourage residents to hold their elected officials accountable to that standard.



Karen Walder