

FINAL

**CITY OF LEBANON
BOARD OF CEMETERY TRUSTEES
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
REMOTE VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS
LebanonNH.gov/Live
WEDNESDAY, October 13, 2020
5:00 PM**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Susan Painter, Vice Chair Fran Hanchett, Caitlyn Hauke, David Muzzy, Antonio Palazzo

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Pat McCarthy – Sexton, Paula Maville – Deputy City Manager, James Donison – Director Public Works

GUESTS: Sarah Riley, Judith Bush and Mary Childers

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:02 PM by Chair Susan Painter.
A Roll Call of Board Members who participated remotely is listed above.

A. Review of meeting procedures and NH RSA 91-A “Right-to-Know” requirements

Chair Painter delivered the Right to Know procedures to the Members and the public.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. September 9, 2020

*Mr. Palazzo MOVED to approve the September 9, 2020 Minutes as presented.
Seconded by Vice Chair Hanchett.*

Roll Call Vote

Mr. Palazzo, Ms. Hauke, Vice Chair Hanchett, and Chair Painter all voting Yea.

None voted Nay.

**The Vote on the Motion was unanimously approved (4-0).*

III. CEMETERY SEXTON REPORT

A. Cemetery Updates

This month there was one full burial on a weekday and 3 cremations with one on a weekday and two on weekends. They are continuing with mowing and leaf removal. They are down to two staff members. Cornerstone contractors worked in School Street Cemetery and are close to being finished. The fountain that was added and donated at Glenwood Cemetery had some vandalism. A vehicle destroyed the grass around the fountain. The assessment for the cost was about \$2000 in damages for labor and materials. It has been repaired. The incident was reported to the police. If it is ever determined who did it, they will be able to prosecute. There are cameras up there, but it was not caught on camera. They were able to offer burial lots on the side of Glenwood Cemetery where the underground was scanned and surveyed. There were 48 new burial sites and 22 of the lots have been sold since September. The department has

one vacant staff member and has made an offer. There are other seasonal openings that will be filled again as needed. One of the lawn mowers blew up and it is hoped it can be replaced next year. It is a \$15,000 expense. There is a fence at Valley Cemetery to deter unauthorized access to the rail trail and they continue to monitor that area. They have not determined where the cost of the water, that was due to the leak, will come out of the budget and how it will affect the line items of the budget.

Mr. Muzzy experience technical difficulties and rejoined the Board at 5:12 PM.

B. Plan for notifying owners of lots using grave curbing in West Lebanon Cemetery

Mr. McCarthy has been collecting the lot numbers from all the cemeteries to assemble a list for the office to contact all the parties involved. He will be drafting a letter that will go to all contacts and owners that they can locate. He proposes that there may be one meeting to ask everyone to make the request to the Board, to be handled simultaneously. He intends to write a letter and attach the bylaws and ordinances to the letter. He would also like to address all maintenance needs of each grave at each cemetery, including bushes and plantings that are not maintained. That may have to be on hold to get the curbing addressed more quickly. They will try to minimize the number of meetings that are needed to meet with owners in addressing the long-term maintenance agreements. This may be a good project for the winter to get everyone on board in time to be put in place by next spring. Determining the number of graves that need a maintenance agreement will be the first step. Vice Chair Hanchett offered to help determine the number and organize the list. It is important to notify the owners as soon as possible, that the curbing is not in accordance with the regulations and that the Board will be taking the actions to help the owners come into compliance. The West Lebanon Cemetery graves have been on the agenda for the last 3 months.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

A. Infant grave areas at Glenwood

Mr. McCarthy received bids for the granite posts, about \$1100 each. Chair Painter showed pictures of the monumentation shape of granite columns. The Board discussed what should be written on the columns, how they should look and what should be engraved. There are 3 sections of infant graves that are divided by years.

The Board discussed that infant graves sounded more appropriate than baby graves and what is appropriate for an image that does not have a religious connotation. Many cemeteries have a lamb for a symbol and the image has historically been used in graves for infants. No one was against having a picture and most thought a lamb was appropriate. The lamb has been adopted in Christian iconography, as has many other symbols, but it is not necessarily exclusive to Christianity. A butterfly and other images were discussed, including teddy bears. The corner lot of the cemetery that has 30 graves is named Baby Land Corner in the database and on records. Some Members would like to have consistency in the names on the columns, however they may continue to use the name Baby Land Corner. Members were voicing consensus about using the lamb, name one Baby Land Corner and the others will be labeled infant graves with the decade of the graves that are associated with each area. There was no vote at this time.

Mr. McCarthy believes it will be less costly to do the engraving with the granite company. It is difficult to determine the cost without the actual design. Mr. Palazzo will show sample pictures of options to his sister to determine the approximate cost to do the engraving. Then the costs can be compared between the two sources. The Board discussed how the years were distributed throughout grave areas. They will need to get the correct data, including what was recently found in the old record book, to write the dates on the monuments.

B. Green burials and proposed process to move forward – Draft still in progress

Mr. McCarthy has put together a rough outline with good content and they are working on a draft and a plan to be sent to Ms. Hauke for her feedback. After Ms. Hauke's review, a final draft will be presented to the Board at the November meeting. Mr. Palazzo said he provided an outline of information about the technicalities of green burials and Mr. McCarthy said they have addressed his concerns. Mr. Palazzo is questioning how approval will be requested and approved. The first step is to determine how green burials could be done and what other sites will be considered. It will be a full open process. A broad draft based on the information they have and what other cemeteries are doing will be put together to facilitate the discussions. The Board can proceed in whatever process the Board would like to follow. The draft of the ordinance is a point to start a review and an outline for any additional information that is needed. If the Board decides they are not interested in having green burials, that will be the Board's option.

Judith Bush spoke about the possibility of other cemeteries for green burials. The cemeteries will be evaluated for their soil in order to make this the greenest process and where decomposition will easily take place. Mary Childers spoke to the Board and has an interest in knowing as much as possible about the green burial process in Lebanon. She said there are a number of Lebanon residents who are interested in having green burials and it is an important option for some individuals. She would like to have the positive side and value of green burials incorporated into the documentation that is provided to the public.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Access through Valley Cemetery to the Mascoma Greenway

Chair Painter reached out to Paul Coates from Parks and Recreation of Lebanon to see if there is a desire to provide direct access through the cemetery. It has been discussed that access could be developed along the west side along the fence that would tie the Greenway to Mascoma Street. The City is still working on evaluating the options, but Parks and Recreation is supportive of the idea. Access is possible on other Lebanon property that might be beneficial to use. It is important to avoid using the cemeteries as parking areas for vehicles to access the rail trail.

B. Bikes in Cemeteries

It may be important to be proactive to create a situation where there is a balance for the use of bicycles. According to the By Laws, bikes are not allowed in the cemeteries. There are a few cemeteries that would benefit from allowing bikes, such as West Lebanon Cemetery, School Street Cemetery and Valley Cemetery. Students walk and bike through those cemeteries to get to school. Staff believe it is important to educate people that bikes should not be allowed in cemeteries and should not be allowed to drive over graves. If individuals are staying on the road in the cemetery, Staff are not going ask the bikes to leave. But it is important to have it in the ordinance for bikes that are not respectful of the graves.

They discussed that bikes are a means of transportation and perhaps it should be allowed with a set of rules to follow, similar to an automobile. Ms. Maville said this is an enforcement issue. The reason for stating no bicycles in the ordinance is that there is no one at the cemeteries to enforce any issues. Having regulations allows enforcement ability if issues arise. The property within the cemetery is private property. If the Board wants to take this up again, it can be addressed. Cemeteries are not open space and a balance is important in these matters. The Board discussed the pros and cons of using bicycles in cemeteries. Perhaps the rule can be that bikes must remain on the roads in the cemeteries.

Tanya Boisvert, Ward 3, spoke saying that a cemetery is a sacred place of rest. It is important that people are respectful of what a cemetery is supposed to be and that it is not a recreational place. It is not a passthrough to a recreational area. Many dogs are allowed to defecate and urinate on graves so perhaps dogs should not be allowed in cemeteries. She would like to have a way to ticket people who are not following the rules.

C. Smoking in Cemeteries

Smoking is currently allowed in cemeteries according to the ordinances. Because the City does not allow smoking in any public areas, it was asked if this should be addressed in cemeteries.

Chair Painter MOVED to amend Chapter 46 to ban the use of tobacco within public cemeteries.

Mr. Palazzo said visiting a grave for a long period of time is difficult for people who smoke. Cigarette butts are usually a problem in public areas. Because this is a deeded property, it is difficult to say a person cannot smoke on their property. It is also about equal protection of fresh air.

Seconded by Ms. Hauke.

Roll Call Vote

Ms. Hauke and Chair Painter voted Yea.

Mr. Palazzo, Vice Chair Hanchett, and Mr. Muzzy voted Nay.

****The Vote on the Motion failed (2-3).***

D. Odd Fellows (Fran)

The Odd Fellows have agreed to pay for the repair of graves for any Odd Fellow members. Tomorrow night there is an Odd Fellow Meeting. They will be discussing donating a bench for the baby memory garden by the fountain.

E. Finding an Infant Grave (Fran)

A family has been looking for a niece that died several years ago and Vice Chair Hanchett helped find the lot where the baby is buried. The old record book revealed the lot and Mr. McCarthy will be trying to locate the actual grave.

F. Annual clean-up of cemeteries discussion

A notice was in the newspaper about the annual cleanup. Perpetual Care is the mowing and the trimming. The annual cleanup of the gravesite is not part of the perpetual care agreement. An agreement pays about \$3 per lot per year for mowing and trimming. The annual cleanup occurs in spring and fall. The notice was in the paper for people to remove anything they want to remove before the end of the year. Staff will remove anything that is damaged or creating a mess. It takes about a week for staff to do the work. They ask that everything is placed at the monument end of the lot to make it easier for to maintain the graves.

G. Valley Cemetery – keeping embankment clean

The Board agreed it is important to have a discussion about keeping people from littering and throwing debris in the Valley Cemetery. DPW is doing due diligence by all staff on a regular basis, to minimize the problem.

H. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Chair Painter said she has been Chair for the last two years and she would like to see someone else take over at this time.

*Mr. Muzzy nominated Vice Chair Hanchette as Chair.
Seconded by Mr. Palazzo.*

Roll Call Vote

*Mr. Palazzo, Ms. Hauke, Vice Chair Hanchett, Mr. Muzzy and Chair Painter all voting Yea.
None voted Nay.
The Vote on the Motion was unanimously approved (5-0).

*Mr. Muzzy nominated Mr. Palazzo as Vice Chair.
Seconded by Vice Chair Hanchett.*

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Roll Call Vote

*Mr. Palazzo, Ms. Hauke, Vice Chair Hanchett, Mr. Muzzy and Chair Painter all voting Yea.
None voted Nay.
The Vote on the Motion was unanimously approved (5-0).

VI. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS-NONE

VII. ADJOURNMENT

*Mr. Muzzy MOVED for adjournment.
Seconded by Ms. Hauke.*

Roll Call Vote

*Mr. Palazzo, Ms. Hauke, Vice Chair Hanchett, Mr. Muzzy, and Chair Painter all voting Yea.
None voted Nay.
The Vote on the Motion was unanimously approved (5-0).

The meeting was adjourned at 7:06 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Linda Billings
Recording Secretary