

FINAL

**CITY OF LEBANON
BOARD OF CEMETERY TRUSTEES
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
REMOTE VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS
LebanonNH.gov/Live
TUESDAY, November 10, 2020
5:00 PM**

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Pat McCarthy – Sexton, Paula Maville – Deputy City Manager, Paul Coats – Recreation and Parks Director

GUESTS: Colin Smith – Ped Bike

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

Review of meeting procedures and NH RSA 91-A “Right-to-Know” requirements
Chair Hanchett delivered the Right to Know procedures to the Members and the public.

A. Announcement by Chair Hanchett: Goals for the Year

Chair Hanchett, as the new chair, expressed a desire to:
Continue to move forward and make the cemeteries a place of beauty and serenity
Make cemeteries self-sufficient.
And to provide a final resting place for residents of Lebanon.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. October 13, 2020

*Ms. Painter MOVED to approve the October 13, 2020 Minutes as presented with amendments.
Seconded by Mr. Muzzy.*

Amendments: Page 2, Line 47; Remove ‘the community member’ and Add ‘his sister’. Page 3, Line 40;
Add ‘West’ before Lebanon.

Roll Call Vote

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

None voted Nay.

**The Vote on the Motion was unanimously approved (5-0).*

III. CEMETERY SEXTON REPORT

A. Monthly Report

This month there were 2 full burials and 6 cremations. Half of each were on weekdays and half on weekends. Mowing is done and leaf cleanup is ongoing. They are getting ready for winter. Cornerstone's services are complete in School Street for Phase 2. A total of 68 stones were repaired and cleaned. Five stones were beyond repair.

In September he spoke of vandalism in the Glenwood Cemetery and it has happened two more times. The incidents were not caught on the camera. They are continuing to work with the police to resolve and are stepping up patrol. They are contemplating closing the gate in the evening. That would involve having someone, likely the police lock off the roadways at night and having DPW open the road in the morning. People would still be able to walk in. Paul Coats from the Recreation Department offered the use of a security camera they have recently purchased that could be used to capture the culprit. It is more robust than a game camera and will result in better images. The Logan Fountain, the second one in Glenwood is completed. Mrs. Logan has visited the fountain.

The School Street building was contracted to have the foundation drilled. They came across a cobblestone foundation that ran deep and prohibited them from lifting the building. It will be re-evaluated in the future to determine if they will move forward with lifting the building. The new hire has come on board. There is still some activity in the Valley Cemetery, and they are seeing erosion on the embankment.

B. Green Burial Update

The update was discussed in the Old Business section.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

A. Revisit the burials on private property that was not acted on last year

A woman was reburied off Route 4 when road construction was done. The property is now for sale. There are also burials on Hardy Hill. They discussed if it is possible to have something written into the deeds to inform anyone who purchases a property. Mr. McCarthy offered to contact the real estate agent and find out if it would make anyone uncomfortable about purchasing the property if they were told someone is buried there. He will pass on the information and make the agent aware, but that may not get the information get into the deed.

B. Discuss and finalize a vote on bike access from the Rail Trail through Valley Cemetery

Paul Coats, Recreational and Parks Director and Colin Smith from Pedestrian and Bicycle Committee addressed the Board. They understand the issues, that private gravesites have been walked on. Mr. Coats supports finding a way to put a stop to this behavior. There should be a solution that would please everyone. Protecting private cemetery plots is primary. Secondary is allowing people to access the cemetery from the Greenway. He showed an aerial view of the cemetery showing the existing way people have been accessing the cemetery. He also showed a potential pathway that reflected a connector path that could be used, leading out to Mascoma Street. This pathway would be developed by volunteers and they would make every effort to prohibit people from using the cemetery as a trail head and parking cars in the cemetery. There are areas for parking cars that are not in the cemetery and still close by. He proposed allowing them to construct the pathway and evaluate if it remedies the issues of people riding and walking over cemetery plots. If more restrictions are necessary to eliminate the issue, they would move in that direction.

Mr. McCarthy thinks most of the problems have come from the bridge being closed. They are not stopping people from riding bicycles unless they are causing damage or riding on graves. He feels that allowing the access and then trying to stop it would likely be more problematic. Ms. Painter thanked Mr. Coats for the suggestion and the summary of the situation. She cited other cemeteries that all have connecting routes through them and people travel through the cemeteries to connect within their neighborhoods. She said that it seems like Valley is being singled out and not allowing access. It was also thought that having access might keep people from dumping in the area. She read an email from Alise Prime and a letter from Joffrey Peters supporting the access to the Greenway through the cemetery.

The Board discussed any potential loss of grave sites if the fence line for the pathway was built. They also discussed adding signage to direct people to use the pathway to access the Greenway instead of going through the cemetery. Colin Smith spoke about how they are hoping to produce signage and keep bikers and pedestrians following the paths and keeping them from creating a nuisance. There would be additional grass maintenance related to weed whacking. The recreation department maintains the greenway but did not offer to maintain the fence along the pathway. That would be DPW work.

Doug Boisvert spoke and asked who established the trail head at the Valley Cemetery. The Mascoma Greenway committee has done nothing to establish a trail to the cemetery in any official capacity. At one point some type of map was posted showing a proposed trail head and that was corrected. There is an area across from the cemetery that is a trail head and Valley Cemetery might have been used for a naming purpose to show it was close to the cemetery. It may have been a miscommunication. At one time, the recreational department asked the State if they could use an old access road that was built during the highway construction, the request was to establish a linkage that would not impede any cemetery plots. That request was denied because that area is under Federal jurisdiction, and they dropped efforts to build a trail. Ms. Maville clarified that there was a map on the website because there was confusion about the access behind the Jewish Cemetery and the draft map for a proposed trail head through the cemetery. That map was removed several months ago.

Ms. Painter discussed the sliver of property that would become the pathway along a fence. She asked if that would ever be used for burials. That roadside edge it is about 15 feet wide, enough for two graves along that whole stretch. It would be enough for about 100 graves. The State owns the rail trail, but they have permitted all the uses and requirements to maintain to the rail trail. Mr. McCarthy asked Mr. Coats if he would check with the State to determine if they would allow the connector path. He responded that the State has been in support of it, which is different from the Federal jurisdiction. This western side that is proposed is not Federally regulated.

***Sue Painter MOVED to continue discussions with the City on exploring a pathway from the Mascoma Greenway through the Valley Cemetery.
Seconded by Mr. Muzzy.***

Roll Call Vote

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

None voted Nay.

****The Vote on the Motion was unanimously approved (5-0).***

Ms. Maville asked what further investigation is being requested by the Board. They responded:

1. Defining the actual desired pathway
2. Impact on potential grave sales
3. Any liability concerns
4. Maintenance

5. Determination of State and Federal property lines and jurisdiction

C. Progress on curbing owners

Chair Hanchett created a list of graves with curbing and it was verified by Mr. McCarthy. In most of the lots with curbing, the owners are deceased, and Staff are not aware of the next of kin. There is only contact information for 2 of the graves. The curbing is being maintained and they hope to educate people if they are seen. In the future, the form that has been created will keep track of relatives and contact information. It seems wasteful to take up the curbing because it is being maintained. The Staff are not having issues with the curbing. If the curbing does not continue to be maintained, they can remove the curbing. There were no objections from the Board to allow DPW to decide if there is any need to make further efforts to have the curbing removed.

D. Baby/Infant Sections – Finalize plans so estimates can be obtained

The prices on the columns seem steep, but they are large pieces of granite. Because the columns are 8 feet long, there likely would not be much increase in the price if the engraving is done by the granite distributor. The image of a lamb is going to be used. How the engraving is done, digital or hand etching, depends on the finish on the granite. Previously the Board said one column would have Baby Land with dates and the two others would say Infant Graves with dates. The dates need to be verified. The most expensive part is the type of drawing, which will impact what type of granite is used. Mr. Palazzo clarified what would be written so he can get an estimate from his sister-in-law for the cost to engrave the columns. Previously polished granite on the front and back was quoted. Polishing only the front might reduce the cost by 30%. Polished granite requires less maintenance and will make the letters stand out. The size is approximately 10 inches by 6 inches by 8 feet. Ms. Painter will send draft images of the words, dates and pictures of the diagrams that can be sent out for pricing. Mr. McCarthy will send her the picture of the lamb they want to use. They will get prices on the granite, the finish and the engraving so the Members can do a comparison.

E. Natural/Green Burials: Review draft outline of proposed amendments and discuss process to move forward

Chair Hanchett asked if everyone had a chance to review the documents that were provided to the Board. Mr. McCarthy started the discussion. To produce the document, he reviewed materials and documents from other cemeteries and reviewed the Board's documents and the materials and language with Ms. Hauke. They combined all the information and came up with conclusions about what would work and what would not work and what would likely work best for Lebanon. The Green Burial Counsel was consulted, and this draft represents what is thought to be appropriate for the Lebanon situation. The Board members discussed how to move this forward based on past discussions, concerns and questions. This is a very rough draft outline. The Board will continue to review what was presented to evaluate what is not addressed, where other information should be acquired, and other people who have experience with green burials. It would be helpful to have questions to ask other experts. Eventually legal consult will be important as well.

Mr. McCarthy said an additional location has been discussed. One potential place is the Old Pine Tree Cemetery. It has natural burials from back in the 1800s. On the top it is fairly flat and that area could be utilized. There are no maps of that area, but a scan would indicate what areas can be used.

Ms. Hauke discussed the draft. She believes it is a good foundation to start their work. They are trying to find a balance between DPW needs and the people who want green burials. It would be a good idea to

have more input from the community as well as collecting Board Members thoughts to review at a subsequent meeting. They are going to set expectations and establish next steps and determine when to invite comments from the public. It feels like there are major categories that need to be broken down further to have constructive discussions. An example is it is difficult to understand how the information was obtained and what lead to the statements in the document. Clarification on the language and where it came from and how was it arrived at would be helpful. The sources of information were evaluated and incorporated by City staff and the City Manager based on how they thought green burials could function for the City of Lebanon. One important point is what maintenance the City would be responsible for and what is the City's liability. The City will be involved in digging graves. They do not intend to provide the services of the lowering devices going forward for any type of burial. Funeral homes and people in the business are accustomed to having their own lowering device and this will not be questionable. The funeral homes will contract with others to do the work.

They concluded they will take the draft that was presented, get input, determine what information is needed and what questions need to be asked, within the next two weeks, to bring this back to the December meeting. Ms. Maville will incorporate numbers into the document so everyone can have a point of reference for discussing the topics. The review process will incorporate revisions into the document as decisions are made, so Members can see the revisions on the screen as they are done. Ms. Maville asked to receive the Board's feedback by 11/20/2020.

Mary Childers asked if she could speak and was asked to hold her comments, as an opportunity will be provided at a future meeting. Rainie Kelly asked to send some questions and comments. Any member of the public who would like to submit comments and questions can do so by emailing Mr. McCarthy and Ms. Maville at the City. They will make sure the information makes its way to the Board.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Discussion of Board and Committee Contact Form

People are asking general questions. Any specific questions or communication that needs to be addressed by the Board will be forwarded to the Board to make sure it is discussed. Very general questions are being asked and tracked. They will keep track of the number of forms that are submitted every month.

VI. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS-NONE

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chair Palazzo MOVED for adjournment.

Seconded by Mr. Muzzy.

Roll Call Vote

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

None voted Nay.

****The Vote on the Motion was unanimously approved (5-0).***

The meeting was adjourned at 6:56 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Linda Billings
Recording Secretary