

Cemetery Department
Minutes of Regularly Scheduled Meeting – March 21, 2022

Present:

James Burlingame, Supt.
Kristen Russell-May, Member & Chair
Donna Neylon, Member & Vice Chair & Clerk
Willis Bond, Member

Absent/Excused:

Public Present:

None

NOTE: *The minutes below reflect the order of the agenda and may not be the order taken during the meeting.*

Approval of Minutes:

Chairman Kristen called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm in the Cemetery Garage at Westridge Cemetery and entertained the motion to approve the minutes of the February 22, 2022; Willis so moved and Donna seconded; it was so voted. Willis then initialed the minutes to indicate that they were approved.

Signing of Deeds:

There were two deeds presented:

Carolyn S. Henry: \$850 at Westridge Cemetery, Section C-1-A, #5 on the North side of North Road and \$550 paid for Perpetual Care;

Joyce Robinson Jugovic for Bruno and Nicholas Jugovic: \$850 at Westridge Cemetery, Section H, Row 3 and \$500 paid for Perpetual Care.

Monthly Burial Count:

Jim reported there was only one burial to-date during March, and it was a full burial.

Review of prior month's expenses: (NOTE: all purchases were from the Expense Account unless otherwise noted)

Warrant Date 3/17/2022:

Stevens Construction (one grave opening) \$250.00 (Revolving Account)

We have a current balance of \$4,937.70 in our Expense Account.

Donna entertained the motion to ratify the payments made on behalf of the Cemetery Commissioners; Willis so moved and Donna seconded; it was so voted.

Old Business:

Continued discussion of incident that took place on October 5th burial service in Westridge Cemetery:

Jim reported that he had turned over to the Town Administrator's office the "Statement of Small Claims & Notice" and now we must wait to hear when the court date will be (Dudley District Court). It is anticipated that the court date won't be for quite awhile as court cases are behind due to the Covid Pandemic.

Donna asked if we would be represented in court by Town Counsel but we probably won't know until after we get the court date. Donna also said that she went on MassLandRecords.com and found out that the property of the person being charged in Small Claims Court works at is his family business; the property is in a Trust in his mother's name. Jim will check with the Town Hall to see who is the owner of record for the family business and its equipment. If none of the family business is in the defendant's name, we may eventually have to place a lien on the paycheck of the defendant if we win our claim and payment isn't timely.

ATTACHMENT #1, copy Small Claims Notice.

Discussion of motor vehicle accident that took place in Northside Cemetery causing property damage to the stone wall along Cemetery Road:

Jim has contacted Mr. B.L. Johnson as requested by the Commissioners and received a verbal quote of \$2,600 to repair 25 feet of the stonewall at Northside Road that was damaged on February 8th by Miss Mariam Angela Wassef who was operating a 2003 Toyota Highlander Crossover owned by Ms. Wassaf's father, Antonious Milard Wassef of 4 Premier Drive, Charlton.

The insurance company of the vehicle's owner will be responsible to pay Mr. Johnson to repair the wall. Jim will have a printed copy of the quote passed along to the insurer.

Further discussion of FY23 Budget:

It appears that we will not need to go to a joint meeting with the Finance Committee to discuss our proposed FY23 Budget requests. Jim reviewed the report received from the Finance Committee that indicates that they voted to accept all of our proposed line-item budget requests for FY23 and added a 2% increase to the wages for the Superintendent.

The Town is using a new computer software program called ClearGov® for the budget process and Jim expects to learn more about it at the next Department Head Meeting. ClearGov® claims to provide local governments cloud-based Budget Cycle Management software for efficient, collaborative, and automated budgeting.

ATTACHMENT #2, copy of budget as approved by Finance Committee.

New Business:

Commissioner Neylon's meeting with Town Administrator Andrew Golas:

Donna pointed out that the purpose of her meeting with Mr. Golas was to make him aware of the five goals and objectives listed below so that he might think of us if he learned of some money or grant available that could help us. She pointed out that the meeting was set up quickly and lasted about a half hour.

Stone walls at Bay Path Cemetery

New Garage at Westridge

Columbarium
Road Paving at Westridge Cemetery
Cemetery Mapping (GPS & GPR)

Mr. Golas suggested that we come back to him with more up-to-date plans for the garage and its cost. After some discussion, Donna moved to authorize Jim to contact the Morton Building agent and ask him/her to attend one of our meetings to discuss the potential project and give us plans and quotes for a 30' x 50' building. Some ideas that were mentioned were to include an office for the Superintendent in the new building with area for meetings. We would then remove ourselves and our equipment from the Town Hall. We would also need to wire the new building for computers, etc.

It was during this discussion that mention of a small chapel came up. We could possibly add it to the new garage area (depending upon costs) or build a small chapel at the same time as the columbarium is built. If we had a small chapel, we would then make a rule that all burials during certain (winter) months be from the chapel. This would save the staff a lot of work setting up and taking down chairs and other equipment.

Per her request, Donna received permission from the Commissioners to contact Representative Peter Durant to make him aware of projects that we would be needing funding for.

ATTACHMENT #3, copy of Donna's report to Commissioners following February 23rd meeting with Town Administrator.

Motor vehicle incident at Westridge cemetery on 3/10/2022:

Jim explained to us that he noticed that someone had gone off the road and upset one of the grave markers and causing damage to the grounds nearby. After his investigation work and with the help of the new cameras at Westridge, Jim has narrowed the time of the incident to March 10th between 1:10 pm and 1:53 pm and he believes that he knows who was at fault. The incident is in the hands of the local police at this time. Luckily, no damage was done to the grave marker/monument that was knocked over and the monument owner does not want to press charges. However, Jim estimates that \$500 worth of damage was done to the ground as it will need to be leveled and re-seeded.

ATTACHMENT #4, copy of pictures of the damage to monument and ground.

Open forum:

Nomination Papers

We were happy to learn that the signatures on Kristen's nomination papers were accepted and her name will appear on the ballot again. We believe that this will be her 10th time on the ballot as Cemetery Commissioner and she's nearing 30 years as Commissioner!

Security Cameras:

The security cameras at Westridge Cemetery have proven to be worth the expense by being able to locate the person who caused the damage on March 10th, even though going through all of the pictures taken by the four cameras was a monumental task for Jim.

Kristen made the motion, seconded by Donna, to purchase more cameras to be placed at Union and Northside Cemeteries, the number of cameras and locations to be determined by Jim; so voted.

Prevailing Wage Complaint:

We learned that Mrs. Nasheen Gagner, employee of Advantage Enterprise and wife of Matthew Gagner, owner of Advantage Enterprise, has made a complaint to the Town's Finance Director. Her complaint reportedly was against the Town's departments not paying the State Prevailing Wage on various tree removal projects. Jim noted that we (the Cemetery Commission) have used Advantage Enterprise to remove trees in the past and prevailing wages were not part of the bid and thus not paid. We do not know what will become of Mrs. Gagner's complaint.

Seasonal Help:

Kristen moved, Willis seconded, to authorize Jim to immediately take the necessary steps to place an ad for a seasonal helper; all applications are to be in by the 15th of April so that we can have this on the agenda for the April meeting; so voted.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for **Tuesday, April 19, 2022** (Monday, April 18th is a State Holiday) with the meeting to begin at 1:00 pm and plans are to continue holding our meetings in the Cemetery Garage at Westridge Cemetery.

As there was no further business before the Commission, at 2:05 pm Kristen entertained a motion to adjourn, Willis so moved; Donna seconded; it was so voted.

Respectfully submitted: Donna L. Neylon, Vice Chair & Clerk

Approved by the Commission----- KLRM

Attachments:

1. copy Small Claims Notice.
2. copy of budget as approved by Finance Committee.
3. copy of Donna's report to Commissioners following February 23rd meeting with Town Administrator.
4. copy of pictures of the damage to monument and ground.