

FINAL

**CITY OF LEBANON
BOARD OF CEMETERY TRUSTEES
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
REMOTE VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS
LebanonNH.gov/Live
WEDNESDAY, September 9, 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: Doug Boisvert

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:01 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. August 11, 2020

Mr. Muzzy MOVED to approve the August 11, 2020 Minutes as presented with amendments.

Seconded by Ms. Hanchett.

Amendments: Page 1, Line 35; Remove ‘Mt. Calvery’. Page 2, Line 20; Remove ‘8’ and Add ‘9’. Page 3, Line 20; Remove ‘Mr. Calvery’ and Add ‘Glenwood.’

Roll Call Vote

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

None voted Nay.

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

Mr. Pallazzo joined the meeting at 5:10.

III. CEMETERY SEXTON REPORT

Mr. McCarthy said during the month of August there was one full weekday burial, one weekday cremation, two weekend cremations and 4 corner stones were placed. They are only doing general maintenance mowing and limited string trimming. All the season staff have left, and they are still down one permanent staff member. Mower Number 1 has severe engine issues. The mower is not worth repairing and it is hoped that replacement will be in next year’s budget. They are getting ready to start

vacuuming the leaves in the cemeteries. There is some continued damage at Valley Cemetery due to the unauthorized access to the rail trail. They have cameras back up again, but the kicked down fence was not seen on the cameras. There were a couple of complaints from residents in that area about trash that is being left in that area. There is more debris added to that area, tv and monitors, that DPW will need to take to the landfill. There is a water leak from a small break in the line in the Glenwood cemetery. Because the conditions were dry, it was not noticed until they received the \$1750 bill. It has caused the utilities budget line to far exceed the budget.

A. Resolution of June 9, 2020 motion by the Board to withhold discussions on Green Burial

A memo was sent today addressing the motion to withhold discussions. All the information regarding green burials from Mr. McCarthy has been received and the Board has yet to have discussions regarding the information provided by Ms. Hauke.

Chair Painter MOVED that the Board recognizes that it has received additional information from Patrick McCarthy regarding green burials and that discussions around green burials can continue with the Board.

Seconded by Mr. Muzzy.

Roll Call Vote

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

None voted Nay.

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

B. Budget updates

Shaun Mulholland re-instated the \$25,000 for monument restoration and stone repair. The contractor that did the work last year has been contacted and the work will be completed by November 15, 2020.

C. Update on grave curbing in West Lebanon Cemetery

DPW is continuing to try to locate the lot owners of the graves with curbing, in order to set up a long-term agreement with them. The owners will need to come to the Board and make a formal request to grant an exception to remedy having the curbing. In the meantime, the curbing is being maintained and is not a problem. Staff are keeping an eye on the graves to make sure problems do not start. Curbs can be on the graves if there is an agreement. If there is not an agreement, then staff will have the option to remove the curbing. Currently curbing makes the maintenance of the grave sites easier for DPW. The stipulations for exceptions and a long-term agreement for curbing will come before the Board for review and approval. Chapter 46, Section 12b gives the Board authority to grant exceptions and allow curbing. If a long-term agreement is not requested by the owners, the City will inform the owners that the City has the option to remove anything that is problematic. The Board will decide how often the agreements will be reviewed with the owners. It is important for the City to understand who is taking care of the grave.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

A. Infant grave areas at Glenwood

It turns out that the old granite pillars from the cemeteries are not in good condition. Chair Painter showed some pictures of alternatives that could be purchased. Benches would need a foundation and

there is not much room to put in a bench. The granite pillars can be obtained in varying sizes. The pillars would then be engraved. The pillars would be dug into the ground without a foundation. If they decide to order pillars, they can be obtained directly from the granite company for better prices.

B. Green burials and proposed process to move forward

Ms. Hauke furnished substantial information about green burials. Ms. Maville will work with Mr. McCarthy to review Ms. Hauke's information, questions and answers, and notes about other cemeteries that have green burials. A document from the Green Burial Council on offering green burials in a hybrid cemetery was also provided by Ms. Hauke. DPW has submitted a document that outlined their concerns. Together they will develop a set of regulations that would be an amendment to Chapter 46 for the Board to review. They will continue to reach out to other cemeteries that have green burials to review their regulations and find out how they addressed some of the DPW concerns. Ms. Hauke will be brought into the conversation before the information is brought to the Board. A lot of information has to be put together and will serve as a foundation to review and discuss the impact of green burials. The Board will have a large part of this process. The concerns, answers and recommendations will be brought to the Board to review in a format that would amend Chapter 46.

Some Board Members have concerns about the green burials being in West Lebanon Cemetery and are interested in considering other cemeteries as well. The green burials would not appear to be any different than the other graves that are in the cemetery. The Board believes it is important to contact the sextons at the cemeteries that do green burials. Staff believe the soil in the section of the West Lebanon Cemetery that was identified, is desirable for this type of burial.

The proposed process would develop an Amendment to Chapter 46 that would be reviewed by the Board and then reviewed by the attorney. The timeline could be October or November with a broad brush of issues, concerns and potential processes put in an outline for the Board to review. The draft will be an outline to evaluate the pros and cons of green burials. Some members of the Board are interested in doing more research.

Mr. Douglas Boisvert, guest, raised objections to the Board addressing green burials. He believes that not everyone on the Board or the City Council is in favor of green burials. Chair Painter responded that the City Council has asked the Board to address green burials.

They discussed the meeting sponsored by the Green Burial Council. It will be recorded so Board Member can review the meeting. Ms. Hauke reminded that allowing green burials does not mean a person has to have a green burial if that is not desired.

C. Soil report

Mr. Pallazzo spoke about the soil report he wrote about the grasses in the cemeteries. It will be distributed to the members and Mr. McCarthy will see that it is included with the minutes on the websites. Mr. Pallazzo addressed several questions. How do they want the grasses to look and how much investment should be made in cemetery grass? The natural grasses will be easier to maintain but they will be less in appearance than grass on a golf course. How is maintenance going to be completed? Fertilizer will help the grasses, but past tests have not made much improvement. This year they will try 3 approaches. The fertilizer applications will be redone this year. In one big sandy soil area the soil will be tilled, and compost added to see if the soil can be improved. They will also scar another area, add seed and then add some compost to that area.

**C. Discuss results of the Board's visual inventory and assessment of municipal cemeteries
(To be distributed electronically prior to meeting)**

Chair Painter sent out the report that was a summary of all the inventories that were submitted. It will need to be reviewed. There were some conflicting statements in the evaluations that the members completed. Each member filled out the form that was generated.

Mr. Pallazzo wrote a brief summary about the conditions of the cemeteries. Mr. Pallazzo said Cole Cemetery is looking in good condition. All the stones are standing up. Day Break news blast did a story about Cole Cemetery.

The buildings have many improvements, there is just some painting and small rot repairs that are still needed, but it is a vast improvement.

The monuments at Cole Cemetery look good and the monument restoration should continue. The split rail fences will be added to Cole and Mascoma instead of painting the fences that are presently there.

The signage at Mt. Calvery still needs to be improved.

There are three kinds of plants, including grasses and weeds, in the landscaping. The soil in the cemeteries is stable with very little erosion. Weed whacking between the graves has been minimal near the end of summer because there is limited staff. Earlier in the year all the trimming was done. In Glenwood, near the new bench, one of the monuments had grass clippings on it. When that happens, grass clippings are usually blown off.

Roads near Glenwood Cemetery need fixing. All the flags should be replaced at Veterans Cemetery. Valley Sacred Heart would also likely be a good place for green burials based on soils.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Solar lights being used at grave sites

Ms. Hanchett mentioned a memo from the NH Graveyard Association asking if cemeteries allow solar lights. DPW said they are not a problem or an obstruction if they are on the monument end. Valley Sacred Heart has the most solar lights and eternal candles. If those are on the monument end, there will be less problems with them getting in the way or getting damaged. In the Spring some of the lights have been removed by staff if they were damaged. Some of lights are spiritual in nature and it's difficult to ask to have them removed.

B. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Chair Painter asked about terms that are up and reappointments at the Council. Chair Painter has been reappointed, Mr. Pallazzo is scheduled for an interview and Mr. Muzzy's reappointment is coming up at the next Council meeting. Members can serve until reappointment comes up or until a member is replaced. Appointment by Council does not mean the same thing as serving as a Chair or Vice Chair. At this time the annual meeting is in October, when the Board was originally established. Rules can be suspended, and members can serve an extended time, such as until January, if the Board would like to make a change. The bylaws would need to be changed if the Board would like to change the annual meeting and election of officers. The elections will be in October this year.

VI. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

A. Access through Valley Cemetery to the Mascoma Greenway

It will be an involved process to make access happen. Section 46-3-K says cemeteries will not be used by skate, bicycles, roller blades, etc. Allowing the use would involve changing the bylaws. Children and foot traffic move through the cemeteries and people do use the cemeteries for walking and may ride bikes through the cemetery to get to the school. The Board will revisit the topic and discuss it again.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

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

Roll Call Vote

***Vice Chair Hanchett, Mr. Muzzy, Ms. Hauke, Mr. Palazzo and Chair Painter all voting Yea.
None voted Nay.***

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

The meeting was adjourned at 6:25 PM.

*Respectfully Submitted,
Linda Billings
Recording Secretary*