

# Waterford Cemetery Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 22, 2025 @ 6:00 PM

Davies Library

In Attendance: Jen D'Agostino, Deb Benoit, Ashley Whitehill, Mark Harpin

Jen D'Agostino called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

## Modifications to Agenda

- No modifications were made.

## Approval of Meeting Minutes

- Deb Benoit motioned to approve the meeting minutes of the October 10, 2024 meeting. Mark Harpin seconded the motion. Motion passed by acclamation of members present.

## Letter of Resignation

- Jim O'Malley emailed his letter of resignation on Dec 12, 2024. Deb Benoit read it aloud.
- Deb Benoit motioned to accept Jim's letter of resignation. Ashley Whitehill seconded the motion. Motion passed by acclamation of members present.
- Jen D'Agostino volunteered to get a card to thank him for his service and everyone agreed to sign it.
- Jen D'Agostino suggested expanding the Cemetery Committee to seven members; other members agreed. Deb suggested waiting until after town meeting to approach the Selectboard with this request. It can be added to the Selectboard's list of appointments the Monday after Town Meeting.
- Gary Allard and Lynn Flemming have expressed some interest in joining. Ashley Whitehill will call Gary to gauge his interest and Jen will speak with Lynn.
- If the committee expands, they could allocate different groups to focus on different tasks. One group could be dedicated to burials, one to flags, one to policies, etc.
- Members agreed to consider who may be interested in joining the committee and discuss it further at the next meeting.

## Spring/Summer Project Goals

- Flags can be put up five days before Memorial day and must be taken down seven days afterwards.
- The committee expressed interest in looking into extending the deadlines so flags can stay up longer. Deb discovered the current deadlines are in accordance with the US Flag Code which states flags should not be graveside decorations year round or become

dirty/tattered from inclement weather. Each member will look into it and return to discuss it further at the next meeting.

#### Survey Update

- Deb received the maps from Nate today. She has some GPS coordinates for Riverside Cemetery she will send him.
- The group looked over the maps and discussed possible projects. The expenses for budgeted projects will need to be prioritized and finalized before any potential new projects can be planned.
- New fencing is included in the 2025 budget. They need to decide exactly where along the property they want the fence to lay. Hill Cemetery is not square, so it is a bit challenging to make the fence functional and aesthetically pleasing.
- Ashley will give the new map information to her fence contact to get a better idea of what options they have and the costs. She showed a few ideas of how the fence might look.
- Lots are currently sold individually or in a group of three. All members agreed selling lots in groups of two rather than three would be ideal. The policy will need to be rewritten and brought to the Selectboard for approval.

#### 5-Year Plan

- Deb suggested deciding the order of urgency to get fences done. Hill Cemetery is planned to be done this year, and the committee hopes to be able to tackle one each year. They will revisit this topic in the fall to get measurements and a quote for the next cemetery.
- Ashley noted that Hill Cemetery needs the sign replaced after the name change. Mark volunteered to contact the Historical Society to see if they are working on replacing it since they changed the name.
- The bridge at Babcock Cemetery needs to be replaced due to flood damage. It is unclear if it is a Highway Department issue. Deb noted that the river is usually low enough to walk over it without getting wet.
- Clem Gray had a local contact who donated topsoil to the town. He and Deb took it to the Lower Waterford cemetery and filled the problem areas. Mark agreed to help identify other areas that need topsoil. He has a few in mind at Riverside Cemetery.
- Mark brought up the fallen tree in Carr Cemetery that needs to be cut. It fell down on its own. Deb volunteered to speak with Town Treasurer Heather Gonyaw to see if insurance will allow the cut wood to be donated to a citizen as firewood.
- The stones in Stiles Cemetery were cleaned in 2021, West Waterford was done in 2022, Hill was done in 2023, Carr was done in 2024, and Deb suggested Riverside should be chosen for 2025. Members agreed.
- Jen read aloud the response she received from VOCA following her inquiry into stone cleaning and green burials. They shared their schedule of when they can meet and agreed

to discuss green burials as well as stone clean up. The committee agreed to meet with them on Tues February 25, any time before 4pm. Jen updated VOCA of their decision.

- Deb showed the group pictures of some ideas for projects in various cemeteries involving fallen stones, sunken stones, etc.
- The group discussed asking the St. Johnsbury Academy to see if they can get some volunteers to help with cleaning. Deb volunteered to speak to them.
- Deb found and presented the old sexton policy that was budgeted for 2025. If the budget gets approved, the policy will need to be updated.
- Mark noted a broken gate at Riverside Cemetery that needs repair or replacement.
- Deb announced that the committee received a \$250 donation from Debby Powers. She volunteered to make a thank you card for Mrs. Powers.
- Dave finished working in Lower Waterford Cemetery and it looks great.

#### Agenda Items for Next Meeting February 25

- Replacements for Committee Positions
- Flag Policy
- Plot Purchasing Size Policy
- Tree at Carr Cemetery
- Fence Price Update
- Deb will figure out how to ask them to appoint more people

#### Adjourn

- Deb Benoit motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mark Harpin, approved by acclamation of members present. Meeting was adjourned at 6:57 PM.