

# Waterford Cemetery Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, September 9, 2024 @ 6:30 PM

Davies Library

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

Jen D'Agostino called the meeting to order at 6:33 PM.

## Modifications to Agenda

- No modifications were made.

## Approval of Meeting Minutes

- Mark Harpin motioned to approve the meeting minutes as amended of the August 06, 2024 meeting. Ashley Whitehill seconded the motion. Motion passed by acclamation of members present.
- The August 16, 2024 meeting had no quorum.

## Budget (Discussion)

- The committee will invite Town Treasurer Heather Gonyaw to the next meeting to discuss budget details. They will bring their final budget estimates to the Selectboard.
- Deb Benoit and Mark Harpin noted in Lower Waterford Cemetery that lots 63 and 36 are 2-3ft sunken and need to be filled in. They will need to be filled before Jesse starts mowing next spring. Mark will speak to the people on Mount Pleasant St. The group will check to see if the families of the graves need to be alerted and check back during the next meeting.
- It would save on costs for the town trucks to pick up the dirt instead of having it delivered, but Jim O'Malley suggested including the shipping cost in the budget to ensure it can get done. He will investigate to see how much they should expect it to cost. He will get a price for delivered and non-delivered.
- Ashley Whitehill spoke with the American Legion and found that flag markers can be purchased at the American Legion Emblem store for \$70 each, and the town will need about 165 emblems. Flags are provided by the Legion for free. Deb still has the flags Jen purchased. The Legion said they don't have a list of veterans, they distribute them by driving around. The Legion requested volunteers to help distribute flags on Memorial Day. The VFW handles putting out flags for Veteran's Day.
- The group agreed they would like to keep the flags out all summer, but to do so the flag policy would need to be changed. Deb recommended waiting to present the issue to the Selectboard until after Town Meeting.

- Jen noted that her family who cares for a graveyard in Ohio get their emblems supplied for free by their county. The group decided it would be a good winter project to speak with the Veterans Affairs Agency in Montpelier to see if they can supply emblems for free.
- It is unclear if mowing costs need to be included in the budget since the town has one contract for all the town's mowing with Jesse. The group will verify with Heather during the next meeting.
- Deb spoke with Jesse about mowing the cemetery on Daniel's Farm Road, Carr Cemetery, and Riverside Cemetery closest to the boat launch. He will go to the sites and give a quote. She will ask for West Waterford Cemetery by the fence to be looked at as well when she sees him again.
- Jesse asked Jen D'Agostino how he should request to start mowing a month earlier than he did this year. He wants to add a few more mows to the cemeteries. The town has a contract with him for 3 years, so they would have to add the cost for the extra pieces.
- Surveying Riverside needs to be included in the budget for next year. Deb visited the site with Nathan Nadeau and he will send a quote.
- Deb suggested using the winter to look into changing the size of lots. Right now, lots are either one casket/three cremains, or three caskets/nine cremains. The group thinks it makes more sense to offer a lot with two caskets/four cremains.
- Topsoil, surveying, mowing, and fencing are the top priorities for next year.
- Mark Harpin offered to go to Stiles and check out the fencing. Deb will check out Babcock cemetery and verify it's on private property. Jen will be at Lower Waterford tomorrow and check while she's there. Riverside is good until the survey and Carr doesn't need new fencing. Hill and Cushman Cemetery will need fencing. Deb suggested starting with Carr Cemetery. Ashley volunteered to measure it.
- Jen suggested including some money in the budget for professional development.
- Jim asked if checks from buying lots go directly to a cemetery account or the town. For example, if they ask the town for a \$10k budget and bring in \$5k in sales, is their budget now \$15k?
- Jim suggested leaving some budget items vague to ensure funds don't get stuck and unable to be used because they weren't able to be used for that specific purpose initially intended.
- The budget for 2024 was \$13.6k. They will ask Heather for a budget to actual and what happens to money in the budget that doesn't get spent.

#### Sexton (Action/Discussion)

- Jen asked if there is a conflict of interest for Deb to be a sexton as the Town Clerk and Deb said she will verify.

- Deb and Mark kept a good record until the end of June of how much time they spent. They spent about 20 hours each, so they should budget for 40 hours of sexton work. Jen suggested budgeting for 50 hours to be safe.
- Mark suggested adding a fee to generate some income as many towns do. Jen points out the sexton position can't profit, so the funds must go back into costs.

#### 5-Year Plan (Discussion)

- Add fencing
- Figure out plot prices
- Deb noted a military stone in Lower Waterford that may be able to get fixed by the Veterans Affairs if they can provide the right proof.
- Locating Veteran stones.
- Rotation of cleaning cemetery stones. Deb now has the stone cleaner D2 and has directions on how to use it.
- Taking pictures of stones to catalog in an online database.

#### Map Comparison (Discussion)

- Updating the card catalog and online database will be a project for the winter.

#### Items for Selectboard (Discussion/Action)

- They will bring their final budget estimates to the Selectboard after meeting with Heather.

#### Agenda Items for Next Meeting Oct 2 6:30

- Budget with Town Treasurer Heather Gonyaw
- Report on Cemetery Visits
- Five-Year Plan

#### Adjourn

- Deb Benoit motioned to adjourn. Jim O'Malley seconded the motion. Motioned passed by acclamation. Meeting adjourned at 7:37pm.