

Waterford Cemetery Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, October 2, 2024 @ 6:30 PM

Davies Library

In Attendance: Jen D'Agostino, Deb Benoit, Jim O'Malley, Town Treasurer Heather Gonyaw.

Jen D'Agostino called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

Modifications to Agenda

- Add Tree Cutting in Lower Waterford Discussion

Approval of Meeting Minutes

- Deb Benoit made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of the September 4, 2024 meeting. Jim O'Malley seconded the motion. Motion passed by acclamation of members present.

Tree Cutting in Lower Waterford Cemetery

- Tree cutting at Lower Waterford Cemetery is scheduled for the third week of October. The original quote had him scheduled for three days of work at Lower Waterford, but one day's worth was used for West Waterford instead, so he is now scheduled for two days of work. Deb Benoit spoke with Town Treasurer Heather Gonyaw and discovered the Cemetery Committee had money in their budget. Deb spoke with Dave who said he would ideally like to spend four days at Lower Waterford Cemetery to remove all the trees and brush. It costs \$1100 for his services per day.
- Jim O'Malley found that Kirby Mountain sells topsoil for \$30 per yard and only one yard is needed. Deb spoke with Clem who offered to deliver it to the cemetery for a \$30 flat rate. Jim offered to meet up with Clem and to get it leveled after delivery and store any extra topsoil out of the way where it is easily accessible for future use.
- Jen D'Agostino asked about Clem's insurance for the job and Deb confirmed he is covered by the town's insurance as a town employee.
- Jim O'Malley motioned to approve paying \$2200 to cut down the remaining trees and brush in Lower Waterford Cemetery. Deb Benoit seconded the motion. Motion passed 3-0.
- Heather Gonyaw asked Deb to get a written MOU from Dave so they can let the Selectboard know they are spending the money and make sure Dave has submitted an updated insurance certificate. Deb agreed.
- Jim O'Malley made a motion to approve spending up to \$75 for one yard of topsoil and delivery. Deb Benoit seconded the motion. Motion passed 3-0.

- Deb offered to contact Clem and organize the delivery.

Budget with Town Treasurer Heather Gonyaw

- Deb Benoit presented the letter received from Nate Nadeau regarding surveying.
- Deb Benoit shared some information about mowing expenses. The current contract is for \$6330. Jesse was asked to increase his work at Riverside and Wheeler Cemeteries for a new total cost of \$7350. This includes initial bush removal and recurring mowing of the newly cleared sections. There will be a surcharge if the price of gas goes up at least \$1 over \$3.29.
- The total cost of the contract covers all town properties. It was set up that way before the Cemetery Committee was formed. Town Clerk Heather Gonyaw asked Deb to see if Jesse could separate the cost for each department so the Cemetery Committee only has to budget for the cost of cemetery mowing.
- Fire Chief Collin Fucci did not need to account for the \$900 mowing expense in his budget in previous years, so he will need to be warned as soon as possible if it must be added.
- Deb Benoit asked if the Fire Department and Library mowing should be a Town Clerk expense. Heather said the Selectboard will have to make that decision.
- Jen D'Agostino asked why the Cemetery Committee approved the change in the mowing contract if the contract covers the whole town. Heather said they are building their budget and the Selectboard will be involved.
- Jen asked about the fuel surcharge and Heather said fuel surcharges are normal. There is no way to know ahead of time what the cost could be.
- Heather shared that the 2024 Cemetery Committee budget allocated \$10,100 for contractual services with \$3,470 remaining. That is where the \$2200 for mowing and \$75 for topsoil will come out of. The committee also has a line item for Maintenance and Repairs with \$3,500 and \$0 have been spent.
- That could pay for surveying.
- Jen asked what happens to the unspent money in the budget at the end of the year and Heather said it is up to the taxpayers how the surplus gets used.
- Deb Benoit suggested using the maintenance and repair money to buy fencing materials. Jen noted the short time frame and Deb agreed they will need to work fast.
- Heather said the total remaining funds in their budget for this year, including the cost of surveying, the extra \$2200 for mowing, and the \$75 for topsoil, is \$2851.33.
- Jen agreed that buying fencing materials with the remaining funds is a good course of action.
- Heather noted that fencing is quite expensive and the remaining funds won't cover the total fencing they need.

- Heather asked about the 2025 budget. Mowing was the only contractual expense anticipated by the board, so they did not increase that line item. They also decided to level fund the maintenance and repairs line item.
- Deb mentioned a line item will need to be added for a Sexton. Jen agreed. Heather checked a previous year's budget and the sexton was an hourly position for six months of the year and cost a total of \$8000. Deb said they accounted for 50 hours of work when the committee had talked about it last. They will have a conversation with the Selectboard about adding a sexton position.
- Talking to selectboard
- Deb informed the group that the Selectboard asked for the Cemetery Committee to give an update at their Oct 14 meeting. They want to make sure the committee are on target to have flags out for Veterans Day.
- Heather said 2025 budget conversations are happening around the end of October/early November. The Cemetery Committee budget will increase from \$13600 to \$18850, including the Sexton position. Heather requested Cemetery Committee members to be present when she is going through the budget so those conversations can happen with the Selectboard in real-time. Jen confirmed she will be there.
- Heather added a miscellaneous cemetery expenses line item to 2024's budget, but the committee agreed it is unnecessary for 2025.
- Deb confirmed flags are not an expense for the committee.
- Jim O'Malley asked where the money goes when they sell a lot. Heather said it is recognized as revenue under the Town Office general fund. It has a separate line item.
- Heather gave the Selectboard a list of decisions that need to be made before she can draft the 2025 budget. She hopes to have those answers and be able to present the draft budget during the Selectboard November 11 meeting.

Report on Cemetery Visits

- Jen D'Agostino has a measuring wheel.
- Deb Benoit has a handwritten list of what needs to be checked out. There are six people left off the maps. Some maps have different locations for the same lot in Lower Waterford Cemetery. Jim O'Malley volunteered to verify the list Deb compiled.
- Jim O'Malley found out it may be possible to get funding from the Veterans Administration in D.C. to pay for flag markers. It is expected to take a few months, but he will continue looking into it.

Five-Year Plan

- Continue 5-Year Plan discussion during the next meeting.
- Deb Benoit will reach out to Nate about surveying.
- The Selectboard requested an update from the Cemetery Committee during their next meeting on Oct 14. Jim O'Malley volunteered to speak for the committee.

- Deb Benoit noted that the flags can be put out seven days prior to Veterans Day, but she will be busy with the election. She proposed a divide-and-conquer plan so everyone could help distribute flags on their own timeline. They will all need to be picked up by Nov 17.
- Jen D'Agostino will reach out to Ashley Whitehill to see what she got for a fencing quote from her contacts.

Agenda Items for Next Meeting Dec 4th 6:00

- 5 Year Plan
- Survey Update
- Fencing Update

Adjourn

- Deb Benoit motioned to adjourn. Jen D'Agostino seconded the motion. Motion passed 3-0. Meeting adjourned at 7:17pm.