

Waterford Cemetery Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, May 14, 2024 @ 6:30 PM

Davies Library

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

Jen D'Agostino called the meeting to order at 6:39 PM.

Modifications to Agenda

- No modifications.

Approval of Meeting Minutes (Action)

- Mark Harpin motioned to approve the minutes of the March 13, 2024 meeting. Deb Benoit seconded the motion. Motion passed by acclamation of members present.

Items for Selectboard (Discussion)

- The former sexton Warner Hodgdon was asked to store all files and maps of the cemeteries in the Town Clerk's Office so the committee could access it. No response has been given so far.

Recap Joint Meeting of April 29, 2024 (Discussion)

- The group hopes the joint meeting will produce good results. Mark Harpin and Deb Benoit spoke with Dr. Lahey to get permission for the cleanup at Carr Cemetery as was decided during the joint meeting. Dr. Lahey approved the cleanup crew of about 8-10 people and the necessary equipment such as pot-o-potties etc.

Goals for Upcoming Year (Discussion)

- Stiles Cemetery has logs on the grounds from a fallen tree that have not been removed. Jen D'Agostino volunteered to pick them up.
- Deb Benoit confirmed with the Legion that they will put flags on the graves of veterans for Memorial Day and replace the big flag in Riverside Cemetery.
- Out of the \$20,000 ARPA funding, \$15,500 has already been allotted to various projects, so there is \$4,500 left. They are interested in using some of the remaining money to fix fencing issues at the Carr, Cushman, and Charles Hill cemeteries.
- Deb Benoit volunteered to reach out to VOCA to get more information about the possibility of the town writing grants for fixing the fences.
- The group wants to prioritize cleaning the stones in the two active cemeteries- Lower Waterford Cemetery and Riverside Cemetery.

- Concern was raised over the lack of cornerstones in the cemeteries. The group is considering requiring cornerstones to be placed before burials and may reach out to current plot owners to see how many currently have cornerstones. They considered a few other ways to mark out plots. Ashley Whitehill offered to show the group the metal framework she uses in Passumpsic.
- The group discussed the possibility of hiring a Sexton for the town. They plan to do further research to find out the potential cost and scope of the position.
- Funeral homes are no longer arranging diggers for burials. The group shared some information about how other towns have arranged their fee structure in response. They plan to continue discussing Waterford's fee structure in a future meeting.
- Mark Harpin pointed out that the town does not currently own a probe. Deb Benoit volunteered to look into possibilities of how they could pay to buy a probe and some fake grass to cover the holes before burials.
- The group discussed the potential to become a commission instead of a committee. They plan to further investigate what it takes to accomplish and how it would affect their responsibilities.
- They plan to identify what their funding needs will be for next year so they can report their expected expenses to the Selectboard for consideration during the drafting of the town's 2025 budget.
- Mark Harpin reminded the group that Keeney's lot in the Riverside Cemetery needs to be mowed before the burial this Saturday. Mark Harpin offered to mow the plot to ensure it gets done on time.
- Deb Benoit volunteered to take the committee members on a tour of all the cemeteries on June 13 at 5:30pm, weather pending. Deb will reach out to relevant property owners near the cemeteries that are landlocked.

Agenda Items for Next Regular Meeting, July 16, 2024, 6:00pm

- Working on budget
- Policies
- Roles and responsibilities of potential Sexton
- Goals for upcoming year
- Items for selectboard

Adjourn

- Deb Benoit motioned to adjourn. Mark Harpin seconded the motion. Motion passed by acclamation of members present. Meeting was adjourned at 8:04pm.