

Cemetery Department
Minutes of Regularly Scheduled Meeting –
March 21, 2023

TOWN CLERK
APR 26 2023
CHARLTON MASS

Present:

James Burlingame, Supt.
Kristen Russell-May, Member & Chair
Donna Neylon, Member & Vice Chair & Clerk
Willis Bond, Member

Absent/Excused:

Public Present:

None

NOTE: *The minutes below reflect the order of the agenda and may not be the order taken during the meeting.*

Approval of Minutes:

Chairman Kristen called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm in the Cemetery Garage at Westridge Cemetery and entertained the motion to approve the minutes of the January 24, 2023; Willis so moved and Donna seconded; it was so voted. Willis then initialed the minutes to indicate that they were approved. Note that there was no meeting during the month of February 2023.

Signing of Deeds:

Laurie E. Faia, \$1700 for Section D, Row H, Lot 1 at Westridge Cemetery on the North side of Dexter Road with \$1100 for Perpetual Care;

James H. Hunt \$850 for Section C-1A, Lot 7 at Westridge Cemetery on the West side of Shirley Drive and \$550 for Perpetual Care; and

James M. & Nancy A Krandemonk \$1700 for Section E-1, Row C, Lot 6 on the West side of Shirley Drive with \$1100 for Perpetual Care

Monthly Burial Count:

January: 2 full burials

February: 7 burials of which 5 were full and 2 were cremation

March: None to date.

Review of prior month's expenses: (NOTE: all purchases were from the Expense Account unless otherwise noted)

Warrant Date 02/21/2022:

Home Depot (small gas-powered water pump)

\$159.00

Home Depot (misc. lumber)

\$24.10

Warrant Date 03/07/2023:

Ready Refresh (bottled water)	\$24.05
Grainger (two anchor shackles)	\$25.24

Warrant Date 03/07/2023:

White's Tree Care (Tree removal @ Northside Cemetery)	\$2000.00
Charlton Oil & Propane (propane)	\$94.95

Warrant Date 03/15/2023:

James Burlingame (work clothing reimbursement)	\$105.96
Advance Auto Parts (two windshield wipers)	\$49.98

Kristen entertained the motion to ratify the payments made on behalf of the Cemetery Commissioners; Willis so moved and Donna seconded; it was so voted.

Our Expense account balances: \$7,877.79

Old Business:

Further Discussion on stone wall repair/restoration in Bay Path Cemetery:

Donna reported that the only progress that she'd made on this grant application was to complete taking photos of the stone wall from the back corner out to Dresser Hill Road.

Continued discussion on proposed cemetery maintenance garage:

As stated at our January meeting, Donna would contact Bay Path school to find out if they have a project coordinator and where on the school's schedule building a cemetery maintenance garage could be if they chose to work with us. Mr. James Tripp Pockevicius, the Director of Career & Technical Education at Bay Path Regional Vocational Technical High School replied and a meeting date was set up. After a couple of tries, every one eventually did meet at the proposed building site at Westridge Cemetery on Friday, March 3rd.

Attending the 9:00 am meeting along with Mr. Tripp Pockevicius, Jim Burlingame and Donna Neylon were the following from Bay Path:

- Jonathan Vaillancourt – Drafting Instructor
- John Koliss – Carpentry Instructor
- Dan Vigeant – Plumbing Instructor
- Justin Verham - Electrical Instructor and
- Dave Martinson – cabinet & Millwork Instructor

The meeting lasted about half-hour and, at the time of their departure, Mr. Tripp Pockevicius told Jim and I that he expected to have a report/recommendation back to us within a month. We hold great hopes that they will be able to fit us into their schedule!

Following that gathering and at 9:45sm, Donna sent an email thank you note to Mr. Tripp and read it to the Commissioners:

“Jim and I want to thank you and all of your people who came to Westridge Cemetery this morning to meet with us and discuss the possibility of the school’s help with our much-needed new building. I would reiterate that we aren’t looking for fancy but need efficient and serviceability in a building that will be working for the Town of Charlton for a long time. If other questions come up during the planning stage, please feel free to contact either Jim Burlingame or myself. Please pass along our appreciation to all that attended this morning and to all that will take part in the planning for a possible new building for us.”

Jim also told us that he’d been contacted by the Town Administrator’s office and they are also looking for information about our needs and wants as far as the new garage is concerned. We agreed that we’ll simply forward a copy of the report from Mr. Tripp Pockevicius once it has been received.

Update on new F-350 dump truck from MHQ Equipment

Jim reported he had picked up the new truck and that it was running well. He had a form to declare the old 2005 F-350 dump truck as SURPLUS EQUIPMENT. Kristen entertained the motion to sign the form and submit it to the appropriate department at the Town Hall; Willis so moved and Donna seconded. It was so voted and all signed for Surplus Equipment form.

Update on 2017 F-350 pick up engine repair completed by Lamoureux Ford

Good news! The “tick” that Jim had heard just happened to be something that was covered under the warranty! It’s now all fixed and Jim was pleased with the service from Lamoureux Ford in East Brookfield.

Update on Ash tree removal by White’s Tree Service in Northside Cemetery:

This was the large Ash tree (about 3 feet in diameter) and was causing an eminent danger to some stone grave markers and the chapel. Jim reported that White’s Tree Service of Route 31 Spencer did a wonderful job with both the tree removal and the cleanup. It turned out that the tree was diseased so could have been a big problem if a storm or high wind had taken it down. The payment for this work (\$2,000) was on the March 7th Expense Warrant.

Update on the large Oak tree at Union Cemetery:

This tree was removed on the day that we had a funeral at Northside Cemetery and National Grid had not notified Jim ahead of time, as they had previously promised. Donna happened to be driving by and notice the work and let Jim know. He went to the site following his work at Northside and found that they had already removed the upper part of the tree (large Oak about 5 feet in diameter). The work was being done by Utility Tree Care, a subcontractor of National Grid and they had broken a nearby marble bench. This same company had also removed a small Ash tree near Bay Path Cemetery and took down a gate post near the dog pound on Muggett Hill Road. Jim said that Utility Tree Care had left a mess at Union Cemetery and Mr. Eastman was over there this afternoon cleaning up their mess.

Kristen moved that Jim contact National Grid about the mess left by their subcontractor but especially about the crushed marble bench at Union Cemetery and the gate post at Bay Path Cemetery. Willis seconded and it was so voted.

New Business:

Vanpool bus incident in Westridge Cemetery on 02/16/2023:

Jim had notified us of this incident on the 16th of February and sent us photos that our cameras had caught. He and Mr. Eastman were working in the cemetery at the time and heard the van trying to get un-stuck. The van driver had gone down the dead end road in the back far corner of the cemetery and, instead of backing up to leave the area, attempted to drive on the lawn. Luckily, there are no grave markers in this area but the van did cause quite a mess.

Jim contacted the Vanpool company who did not deny the damage by their vehicle and driver. They then passed along our situation to their insurance company who is Old Republic Insurance and to Sedgwick Claims, for the claim resolution. We will be getting a check to reimburse us for the labor, loam, seed and hay to do the repairs ourselves once spring comes.

Spring cleanup schedule:

The spring cleanup has already begun. It is expected that all of the winter decorations will be removed by the first Monday of April and, weather permitting, the water will be turned back on in the cemeteries by the end of April.

Discussion on OSHA 10 safety classes held on March 8th and 9th:

Both Jim and Mr. Eastman attended the classes held in Charlton in the “break room” at the Highway garage; both are now OSHA 10 Certified for life! This was a total of 10 hours each and was State-mandated.

Open forum:

Motor Vehicle Accident near Bay Path Cemetery yesterday:

This was on Route 31 near our garage. There was no damage to either our building or the stone wall. We are not aware of any personal injuries at this time.

Request for burial at Blood Cemetery:

We received a request for a cremation burial at Blood Cemetery (E. Baylies Road). The person who wished to be buried there has lived on property abutting the cemetery for many years. During discussion, it was noted that it might be difficult to have a full burial there because there may be unmarked graves and records are not good (much is unknown) but a cremation burial is possible. It was stated that we may want to open this cemetery up for cremation burials at a later date.

Kristen moved to allow the sale of a plot for cremation burial at Blood Cemetery; Willis seconded. It was so voted.

Discussion on government study meeting regarding DPW operations:

This meeting is to be held in the Town Hall tonight at 6:00 pm. Neither Kristen nor Willis will be able to attend but Donna and Jim plan to be there.

It is anticipated that the discussion will turn to combining the Cemetery department with the Highway Department and the Parks and Recreation Department and we all agreed that move would not be the best for the Town.

We discussed the anticipated additional costs to the taxpayers with no additional benefit to them. We expect that, should this be instated, the top person would receive a substantial salary, and would need additional staff to include foreman/foremen and at least one more secretary.

It is understood that the Highway only has one mechanic at the present time; we maintain and repair most of our equipment within the department and to add extra work that to the Highway's one mechanic would be an additional burden. Thus, we expect that would justify the additional cost of hiring of another mechanic.

Probably the most important part of the Cemetery Superintendent's job, ahead of maintaining the 10 cemeteries, their roads and their markers, is to deal with the individuals and families that come to him in a time of great sorrow while he helps them select a plot for their loved one, helps them with the paperwork and supervises the opening and closing of the gravesite for the funeral. Much compassion is needed at this time and is not something that everyone can do and certainly should not be rushed. It is also very important to keep an accurate record of each grave purchase, its location and, of course, the monies spent by the department on equipment and supplies.

Fiscal Year budget:

Nothing has been heard, to date, regarding a meeting of the Commissioners with the Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee regarding our proposed budget for the coming fiscal year.

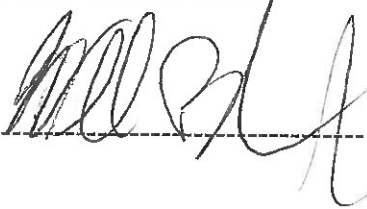
Next Meeting:

Our next meeting was tentatively scheduled for April 28th. Time and location are expected to remain 1:00 at the Westridge garage.

As there was no further business before the Commission, at 1:55 pm Kristen entertained a motion to adjourn, Willis so moved; Donna seconded; it was so voted.

Respectfully submitted: Donna L. Neylon, Vice Chair & Clerk

Approved by the Commission



NO Attachments