

Cemetery Committee Meeting Minutes
April 22, 2024
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Public access was set up through Zoom. In attendance was Jaaron Shaw candidate for Select Board. Committee members introduced themselves to the guest.

In attendance: Andy Tolman (Chair), Grace Keene, Marianne Perry, Tom Molokie, Pam Osborne, Lee Livingston, Brenda Lake, Karen Peterson, Warren Norris (Sec't). and town Sexton. Ben Rodriguez. The meeting was called to order on at 10:30. AM. Draft annual report was passed out by Ben Rodriguez for our review and comment.

Discussion began about the meeting minutes for March. Ben Rodriguez requested some elaboration. These were submitted for review and approved. Tom Molokie moved to accept the revisions. Karen Peterson seconded. There was no further discussion and they were unanimously accepted.

Tom Molokie made a request and a follow up motion that we pass out a copy of prior meeting minutes at any current meeting. This would facilitate refreshing the committees' collective memory prior to beginning any new discussion. The motion was seconded by Brenda Lake. The subsequent discussion revealed that all felt this was a great idea and it was accepted unanimously.

Sexton's report.

Ben Rodriguez reported that there were now six scheduled interments. Of the six four are cremains. Spring cleaning is now beginning as the weather has cleared. Cemeteries are now open to the public. Ben and Matt are switching from winter equipment to the new season. Ben went to safety training session this month.

He pointed out that a fallen tree in the Huntoon cemetery requires attention and he has not had an opportunity to get to it. The size of it may require more robust handling, although he and Matt will do what is within their ability. There were no damages to cemetery stonework from the fall.

Ben and Marianne will schedule a meeting to select foliage flowers for spring planting.

Ben met with contractors to discuss removing dirt piles from East Readfield.

1. Contractor A gave an estimate of approximately \$3000.
2. Contractor B gave an estimate of roughly \$1500.

Discussion occurred over how best to manage the piles of dirt and rocks. Grace asked about the property boundaries. Was there was an adequate delineation between the town

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and abutters? Ben did say that there is an iron pipe. Karen confirmed this. Discussion then centered on who might need fill. Ben alerted the committee that this was not clean fill because of the amount and size of the rocks that are in it. Karen said that she would stop by a local business advertising for fill, By the Board, to see if they might need it.

Pam/Lee/Grace [?] asked about budgeting. Ben replied that there is \$4000 in our ground work budget and another \$1000 in the contracting budget for this fiscal year. He remarked that these amounts and the contractors' estimates are well under the \$10,000 set by this town for formal RFP. Tom Molokie made a motion. He moved that Ben seek the most cost effective and practical option to remove the dirt. Marianne seconded the motion. As the discussion had already occurred the group concurred and approved unanimously for Ben to proceed.

Discussion turned toward the upcoming Memorial Day event to make sure that we had everything in order.

Grace requested that we make sure to get the tree work done prior to Memorial Day. Karen agreed that we needed to have all hands-on deck to remove the sticks and winter debris and that it might be a good opportunity for the committee and other community entities, like Kents Hill to get involved. Marianne said that Kents Hill might help because they are working on community issues for their service day. April 23rd and they've helped us with clean up before. Ben remarked that right now they're not at a crisis point yet. He will notify the committee if help is needed. He is in contact with Hents Hill's liaison, Becca Reynolds, who works with honor students.

Ben is planning a Memorial Day program meant to get family members. and other members of the community to help clean stones. This would include touring of the Readfield Corner Cemetery and he will use the opportunity to teach history, inform interested participants about the cemetery committee functions and maybe even solicit for committee membership.

Flags: we should start thinking about putting up the flags for the Memorial Day holiday. Several committee members ardently want to help put up the flags. Brenda Lake agreed to put up the flags in Dudley, Huntoon and Case. Marianne and Pam will do Kents Hill. Tom and Lee volunteered to flag Whittier and East Readfield. The objective is early May for placement of the flags. One box will be available at town hall. The rest will be at the transfer station. If we need flags, we can ask Karen or Mike. The flag should be put on all veterans' marked graves. Old Fellows, FLT, firefighters and DAR, don't typically qualify for flags. As the State of Maine mandates that we flag all veterans. As we place the flags it is a

good opportunity to do some cleanup by removing decorations that are inappropriate, sticks and trash.

Ben has had discussions with the trapper for catching the creature creating holes that have been found in Readfield Corner, East Readfield and Kents Hill. It is believed the culprit is a groundhog.

Early summer, Ben wants to do a walkabout with the Select Board. He wants assistance from the committee in planning and coordinating it. The purpose is to demonstrate the requirements of the Sexton and the activities of the Cemetery Committee. Tom and Marianne volunteered to help. Grace suggests that the walkabout occurs after the June 11th election to ensure that we have the appropriate Select Board members attending.

The so-called Frontier Fence in East Readfield has not been attended to yet. It is still an eyesore. However, it does not belong to a neighbor and it's not a function of the committee or the employees to force this issue. It's agreed that town manager, Eric Dyer, would probably be best to make contact with the neighbor to see what they might be able to be done with the fence.

Tom, Marianne and Ben; then, Tom, Lee and Ben met to discuss the new rules regarding the use of the cemeteries including applicable definitions. The Cemetery Ordinance was last amended in 2018. These new rules and definitions have changes that have substance and may require a change to the town ordinance that must occur during a town meeting. Procedurally, after debate at the meeting then the Select Board must approve them.

Our guest, Mr. Shaw, suggested we remove the definitions as a fixed addendum to the ordinance completely, as they are not impactful to the rulemaking procedure. Andy requested that we table further discussion of the rules changes until the changes are completed and presented to the committee. Lee is indicated his interest in helping Ben with this process.

Seasonal employee, Noah, will not be coming back this year, which means that Ben and Matt will be required to take over the maintenance responsibilities at the beach. Eric Dyer has sent out a public notice for seasonal help that may alleviate the personnel issue for the season. Also, it is highly likely that Chris will return this season.

The discussion turned to Case Cemetery. In particular, the insect issue. This has been put on hold because last year the grass recovered. However, it will require attention if the grub problem continues. Ben also noted that the public uses the drive area to park and use as a turnaround, which caused a great deal of ruts in that parking area. These will have to be repaired and an end of year solution to prevent it recurrence.

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And he also noted, in summary that we should be able to complete the dirt removal and finish the tree work prior to the new budget year. Karen noted that more stonework was required, but Ben said that Joe of Grave Stone Matters would be able to complete this year's stonework by June.

Discussion turned to Christmas wreaths and the involvement of Wreaths Across America. They provided a successful program and they have reached out to see if we have any further interest in renewing for the coming year. Kathy Woodson and other Select Board members are OK with us also going out on our own, if need be. Ben pointed out that the service is free. Marianne said the event was well organized and had a good value, although there was some concern about conflating wreaths with Christianity. This was dispelled. Karen was concerned that too much emphasis was being placed on using these events for veterans when the greater charge should be memorializing everyone, even if they weren't a veteran. Andy responded to the healthy discussion and recommended we table the discussion so that it will be at the front of our minds next meeting. Lee did volunteer to approach a relative about getting the 13 wreaths that we normally put on the entry of each of the cemeteries. Asked by the chair if there was any other new business. Finding none the Chair adjourned at 11:55.

Next meeting is scheduled for May 20th.

Respectfully submitted,

Warren Norris