

Cemetery Committee Meeting Minutes

April 25th, 2022

Present: Andy Tolman, Marianne Perry, Warren Norris, Ben Rodriguez, Tom Molokie, Karen Peterson, Pam Osborn, Grace Keene

Excused absence: Brenda Lake

Welcoming newest committee member: Lee Livingston, we are grateful for your volunteering and look forward to working with you.

Meeting Minutes for Prior Meeting: Minutes for March were reviewed. Tom made a motion to accept the minutes, Grace seconded. There was no discussion and minutes were unanimously approved. Approved minutes will be submitted to Town Clerk.

Sexton's Report by Ben Rodriguez

Ben updated the committee on the spring cleanup progress. With the change in weather an assessment was possible. The piles of leaves from the end of last years cleanup will be picked up. Mulch needs were also determined and dress coats and larger needs have been determined for the various beds. A couple of weeks will be required to get ready for the season.

Some raking and limb removal will be necessary all around and Ben intends to make sure that the costs are applied to the budget from this fiscal year. This will include not only Stevenson Solutions work on some trees but also work by Hugh LeMaster of Collette Monuments on up righting fallen stones.

Karen noted that on a recent drive-through that all looks well with no major issues. Ben appreciated the positive input.

Ben pointed out that the maintenance of the equipment is proceeding well. They equipment will be returned in time to begin the mowing season.

Internment requests are coming in. Most recent requests are for lot purchases and are for cremains.

Marker delivery is expected soon.

Ben asked for patience as a recent hire resigned and the search for a replacement is beginning. This may result in delays of service due to demands on Ben's coordinating labor as he fills in for split needs.

Old Business

Reviewed the budget items. Andy brought up that the computer software budget item will be unused and will look to see if it can be moved to cover costs that might arise in our drainage repair project. Regarding the deterioration of Church Road and the collapsing of the adjacent

stone wall discussion followed about determining the cost responsibility between the town and Maine DOT and Road Committee and Cemetery Committee funds.

Questions remain:

- Is there a town or DOT repair schedule for Church Road?
- Will the repair address drainage issues also?
- What is the order of events, i.e., will the ditch be repaired first?
- Will ditch repair exacerbate the damage to the wall or be curative?
- Are there funds in the budgets of both the Road and Cemetery Committees that can be applied?

Per Ben, the wall is visibly worsening and no one can predict a point at which a failure will occur. The last review of the drainage was done seven years ago. (See 2015 Limited Engineering Study commissioned by the committee.) Ben will approach Eric Dyer to determine timing of road repair and funding concepts.

Karen has a question related to expense item for \$20 placed on 3/17/2022 detail. Concern was if this was a correct line item considering its small amount. Ben will check with Teresa about this item.

Discussion turned to Wreaths Across America's presentation. Ben noted that he has approached Mrs. Whiteston at Kents Hill School. Mrs. Whiteston is involved with student outreach and is looking for opportunities for students to help in the wider community. The laying of wreaths would be a possible assist from the students. The timing was an issue as the December time frame may conflict with holiday leave. Ben also approached Select Board member, Kathryn Woodsum, who supported the idea of involvement of WAA.

Also, Maranacook Middle and High School are also looking to help in the wider community. They are interested in finding compatible projects such as this.

Marianne mentioned that since the wreaths require individuals to donate money that now is not the time to proceed with this project. Ben pointed out that the town's only commitment is the labor associated with moving the wreaths after delivery. But he agreed that in lieu of the loss of one of the new laborers his time would be constrained.

Tom made a motion that given the time frame and the pressure on the sexton's time that we table active participation in the Wreaths Across America (WAA) program until next year and that we consider a base line level participation with WAA on the meantime.

This was seconded by Marianne.

Discussion followed. This included clarification that the base line would be the laying of the wreath at the veterans' memorial outside of the town hall along with the flags of the services. Ben would determine if WAA would be interested in this limited involvement. Lee asked about the funding which was described to him by Ben. Lee offered a contact that provides wreaths. This is a local vendor that specializes in manufacturing holiday wreaths. This will also require letting WAA know what our thoughts are and finding individuals, organizations or firms who will support the project financially.

After the discussion there was no need to alter the motion. Andy called for a vote and the motion was passed unanimously. We will get with WAA and let them know our thoughts.

Related to the identification of burial sites, Warren asked if the involvement of Dr. Wang and the summer intern, Meghan Lemieux, will be used this summer. Ben said that they will not as we are able to complete the project so aptly started by those two with town resources.

New Business

Tom requested that Ben give new committee member, Lee Livingston, a quick update on the sexton's role and how the committee interfaces with him and the town. This included a synopsis of the following projects:

- Wreaths Across America
- Stone repairs and the implementation of a workshop to teach interested parties
- Walkabouts in the cemeteries with appreciative citizens and the select board members.

Marianne told a story about a couple who she found "trespassing" in the cemetery and she approached them. It was a 97-year-old widower and his caregiver visiting in the early spring. They were appreciative of the grounds and special care obvious given.

Ben mentioned that once the markers come in, he will commence the Memorial Day placement activity. Tom recommended that since the local schools, Kents Hill and Maranacook, are interested in helping the community, then Ben could contact them to help the flag placement. Committee agreed that this was an excellent suggestion.

Ben and Warren to meet next Monday May 2nd, 8:00 am to discuss updating Wreaths Across America on our discussion about proceeding.

Ben and Marianne to meet at Longfellow's to look at seed packs and flower flats that might be appropriate for landscaping needs.

Spring cleanup announcement has been provided to the Readfield Messenger.

Next meeting is May 16th, 2022 at 10:30 am @ Kents Hill Cemetery.

Chair adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Warren Norris
Cemetery Committee