

Cemetery Committee Meeting Minutes

December 19th, 2022

Present: Brenda Lake, Marianne Perry, Warren Norris, Ben Rodriguez, Tom Molokie, Karen Peterson, Grace Keene, Lee Livingston, Andy Tolman (Chair)

Pam Osborn Excused

Meeting Minutes for Prior Meeting: Prior meeting minutes were reviewed and unanimously accepted with minor changes.

Sexton's Report by Ben Rodriguez

Ben reported that one tree of concern is scheduled for removal at Readfield Corner. The cost is \$1700. There is another due for scheduling at Kents Hill.

He is continuing to pursue contracting with Collette's to perform stone/curbing repair this season.

Ben requesting assistance from the Committee for grounds maintenance advice on the Case hill front and the Readfield Corner Reflecting Garden. This would involve flower seed selection and planting choices. Marianne and others would lend their expertise.

Ben noted that the wreaths were in place at each of the cemeteries and he and his crew removed all seasonally inappropriate or worn and faded decorations from the cemeteries.

The Wreaths Across America presentation went as well as possible considering that attendance was limited due to the bad weather. Eric Dyer, Kathryn Woodsum, Ben and Matt and a few others placed the Armed forces wreaths on the recently fabricated stands.

Ben asked the committee for volunteers to reach out to the community at large for help in securing funding or helping in the placement and picking up of the wreaths. He mentioned that Kathryn has agreed to approach the Select Board and discuss possible roles.

This inspired discussion by the Committee. Grace felt December 17th was too late to place wreaths. Ben remarked that the added functions will increase residents' interest and appreciation of Readfield's cemeteries, especially the historical importance. Others expressed concern for the cost and its impact at this time of uncertainty.

Tom proposed that we table further discussion and devote the next meeting to the discussion of Wreaths Across America and how best to fit the program, if at all, into Readfield's future. He moved to do so. Brenda 2nd. No discussion. Unanimous vote to devote January's meeting to this single subject.

Ben gave a first blush accounting of the number of veterans interred in each cemetery:

- 177 in Readfield Corner
- 85 in East Readfield
- 33 in Kents Hill
- 13 in Case
- 6 in Dudley
- 2 in Huntoon
- 2 in Whittier

Total veterans 318. Ben, Dale Potter-Clark, and Readfield Historical Society were sources for compilation.

If the total was applied to WAA costs with 2 for one savings the amount needed would be \$3180.

Ben's challenge through the winter will be the ARCGis project continuation to search and catalogue grave locations.

Old Business

Tom remarked that the letter he proposed is ready for review and approval. The letter is a commendation letter to the Readfield Historical Society for their excellent work in support of the town and its veterans. Discussion continued and after a motion by Tom to complete this work and submit to committee, 2nd by Brenda, with no further need for discussion this was approved unanimously.

New Business

Budget review commenced. Andy stated that his revision implements Eric's policy statements from the meeting last month. The budget will reduce use of the operating funds. Tree management and stone work are proposed to come out of both perpetual care sources and operating budgets. Stone wall repair projects will come from capital allocations. The budget will reduce the amount of tax revenue to support normal budget items.

- \$4500 from general funds
- \$5000 from operating reserve
- \$10000 from perpetual care

If money from perpetual care remains unspent at the end of the budget period it will remain allocated to that item in the next fiscal year.

Note: perpetual care is funded from burial plot sales. Of each \$400 sale \$300 goes to the perpetual care fund and \$100 goes toward cemetery expansion. The town's ordinance reads, in part: "Seventy-five percent of all monies received from the sale of burial plots will be placed in the Perpetual Care Fund. The interest earned on the perpetual care fund may be used, for upkeep and maintenance, for all town owned cemeteries... The remaining twenty-five percent will be placed in an expansion fund Account. The monies in the expansion fund may be used

only for additional land. The amount of funds on hand will be public knowledge and are to be included in the Town's Annual Report." (Pg. 2).

It is imperative that the public be made aware of the Committee's work to save the residents' tax dollars in this economic environment.

Agenda items: Andy recommended a review of each perpetual care agreement needs to be made to ensure the proper application of funds from each and to ensure that there are no missed opportunities to use those funds where warranted. Tom recommended that at February meeting we begin a discussion about the Cemetery Committee's By-laws and rules for cemetery use.

The meeting for January was set for January 9th, 2023 at 10:30 am at town hall.

Chair adjourned meeting at 11:28 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Warren Norris

Secretary.