

Cemetery Committee Meeting Minutes

February 27th, 2023

Present: Brenda Lake, Pam Osborn, Marianne Perry, Warren Norris, Tom Molokie, Karen Peterson, Grace Keene, Lee Livingston, Andy Tolman (Chair), Ben Rodriguez (Sexton) with contributions by Matt and Eric Dyer.

Subject for discussion: Subject for group discussion was the Sexton's recommendation to add a new piece of equipment to the line for use by both Cemetery maintenance and Road maintenance. The item is a chipper/shredder/leaf management. It is a Connecticut assembler manufacturer and supplied by a local equipment company. Although the staff has not seen the machine in operation there is a video on the Union Farm Equipment website. The Sexton and crew feel it will be a great time saver since most of the maintenance centers around leaf management in the fall and sticks, branches and tree limbs in the spring. The cost is \$20,858 and the town would apply capital budgets to the expense. This would be split roughly 50% between the capital budgets of the Road and Cemetery Committees. There is a one-year warranty.

Pam asked if the hiring of manual labor was explored. Ben remarked that this would be a great benefit for saving time and expense. He added that the Budget committee has reviewed the machine and its implications for labor saving time and recommends its acquisition.

Karen explained that leaves have always been a challenge and this machine will be of great use by our town.

Grace asked if the noise is going to be a problem. Ben stated no more than the noise created by the two leaf blowers used now.

Tom was concerned about possible friction between the splitting of time between the two committees' usage and the splitting of costs especially during times when there are overlapping needs. Ben stated that the cost will be shared by the two committees.

Tom added that any decision by the Cemetery Committee would have to include tracking the time the machine is used between the two functions and ensuring the budgets are aligned for that usage. Ben assured the committee that this could be effectively tracked.

Marianne asked about the leaf debris: Could it be used as mulch? Committee members agreed that it could and possibly for trails, as well. Ben mentioned that there might be a call for stockpiling it at the transfer station for use by the citizenry.

Pam suggested that we move to vote. Andy recommended that the motion should frame the question around agreement with the Budget Committee's approval.

Tom moved to recommend the purchase to the Select Committee with the caveat that repairs and usage be closely monitored and the cost both in capital and expense be prorated between the two committees' budgets.

Pam 2nd and the floor was opened for discussion. There being no further comment, vote was called. Vote was unanimous.

Andy asked that the committee table the discussion related to the Wreaths Across America. This request was due to WAA's lack of availability for a Zoom presence for our meeting. They may be available for our March committee meeting. We will meet at the stated 10:30 am time with their (Tara DeLong's) presence at 11:00 am.

Andy then requested we move to our regular business.

Meeting Minutes for Prior Meeting: Prior meeting minutes were reviewed. Tom moved to accepted minutes with agreed revisions, Marianne 2nd, no discussion committee voted to unanimously accept the minutes with noted minor changes.

Sexton's Report

Ben reported that maintenance removed a dying tree in Readfield Corner. Stevenson performed the removal. The Case Cemetery sign was damaged during an auto accident. There were no injuries. The town seeks compensation from the driver's **comprehensive insurance policy**. There was an observation by a committee member that there were black metal chains which bled an iron stain on the sign. Ben acknowledged this and said the stain can be easily cleaned. Other durable but compatible materials are being sought for replacement.

New Business

Andy then requested thoughts and comments about the Rules, Regulations and Policy governing the committee and town related to managing our cemeteries.

Tom brought up the cost to the town of righting and repairing stones due to poor design in foundations or poor material choice, further suggesting we needed to dictate minimum standards to protect the town's funding.

Ben noted his authority comes from page 7 of the Readfield Cemetery Handbook, item a. under Grave Markers & Monuments, "... The placement of all monuments and grave markers will be set under the direction of the Sexton." Beyond this there is no guidance for either loved ones wanting an internment or for the Sexton who ultimately has the role of maintaining the stones and monuments. Another area of authority is that no burial can be performed without the knowledge of the Sexton, who can then guide the loved ones in the internment process and the monument placement.

An area that needs consideration is that the town assumes default financial responsibility after families of interned are deceased themselves or are gone from the area and have abdicated responsibility. Ben has researched different town ordinances and will provide them for committee members for their consideration.

Pam recommended that we find a geologist to help with the underlying soils to ensure strong base for foundation stones. Lee mentioned that the foundations are inexpensive so design criteria won't affect the cost too much and we can stipulate better specifications. Warren agreed

and suggested that foundation base preparation costs be added into perpetual care charge for the lot. Ben noted that the ARCGIS application can be used to determine soil appropriateness.

Ben let the committee know that there are several documents that govern our cemetery management:

- Cemetery Handbook
- Cemetery Ordinance
- Cemetery Lot Conveyance
- Certificate of Burial
- Cemetery Map

Tom said that tightening up the rules to preserve the budget for future care of the cemeteries. Extending this is giving a stronger job description for the Sexton.

Marianne would like to see more loving language in the handbook for those seeking interment for their loved one and maybe it should be revamped, updated and upgraded. She also asked that we consider the green cemetery as a possible future offering. Brenda reminded the cemetery committee that the committee had investigated this potential several years ago. Ben said that recently Maine Public Television had a segment on the Baldwin Green Cemetery in Fayette. This direction will have to look at land/soil options. The ARCGIS database may have information here also. The cemetery expansion set aside could be looked at for this as a possibility. Marianne also suggested a section of set aside as a pollinator preserve (meadow).

Ben requested that the committee consider using the ordinance Section 4. Item 1. E. "The committee may create subcommittees to work on particular issues..." E. These subcommittees are not required under the town's rules for public advertisement and notice. Their work product would be reviewed and considered in the public meetings. Also, the committee's rules allow rules changes. See Section 4. Item 2. E. "The Committee may adopt additional rules, not inconsistent with this Ordinance, for its operation, as necessary." A point to be considered is that all current lot owners are subject to the most recent requirements and rules (no grandfathering).

Tom pointed out that our meetings must take place in a public building. Ben agreed and pointed out the meeting must be advertised with notice for changes.

Andy polled for additional immediate business in need of discussion. There being none, he requested a motion to adjourn. Lee so moved, Marianne 2nd and with no discussion Andy gaveled the meeting concluded at 12:10 PM.

Next committee meeting will be the March 20th at 10:30 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Warren Norris

Secretary