

Readfield Cemetery Committee Meeting Minutes

January 8, 2024

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

Meeting was called to order by the Chair at 10:30 am.

Secretary's Report: Voted to accept the minutes from November 2023.

Sexton's Report: Ben Rodriguez:

Wreaths were placed at all cemeteries in early December, with assistance from Doug Ferris and Darlene Lavallee. Wreaths were removed at the end of the Christmas season. There was a brief discussion about leaving them up a bit longer.

The Wreaths Across America presentation went well. Ben saved the metal wreath holders to use again.

After the recent rain and wind storms, no stones were damaged, and there were no major issues in any of the cemeteries. There was a branch down at Dudley, and several fallen trees at Huntoon which will be picked up in the spring.

Need to pick dates to follow through with the Tree RFP, including Pre-Bid and presentation to the Select Board. It is likely that \$7000 will be spent, as there are many low hanging branches and dead limbs.

Ben would like to get Joe Ferrannini to help with gravestones for a couple of days before the end of the fiscal year.

There have been signs of an animal digging problem at Kents Hill, Readfield Corner, and East Readfield cemeteries.

Ben and Marianne will go to Longfellow's sometime as spring gets closer to look for flowers to plant in the berms at East Readfield. Nothing will be done at Readfield Corner because of needed stone wall repairs.

Ben will continue to work with the chipper/shredder in the cemeteries. No maintenance has been needed on the machine; it has done 7 hours of work. Ben says that it works very well for our needs.

Marianne encouraged the use of ecological gardening and maintenance in the cemeteries.

Clean fill is a problem at several of the cemeteries. There are big piles of dirt and rocks at both Readfield Corner and East Readfield. Lee wondered if there was a Readfield contractor who would haul the piles away at no cost; Tom moved and Grace seconded that Lee, with Eric's approval, approach someone local to haul the piles away for free. All approved.

Bylaws Review:

The Adornment of Gravesites section of the Rules was amended and passed unanimously by the Cemetery Committee. Thanks to Pam and Marianne for their work on this section. The Committee plans to go over the Regulations in their entirety at the next meeting. The draft will then head for approval to the Select Board and Town Manager.

Budget Update/Planning:

The swale at Readfield Corner seems to be working. Repairing the stone wall will be very costly; perhaps \$4000 for just 20 feet of work. Ben suggested doing only part of the wall to reduce the budget. Karen urged that costs be kept feasible, and to focus on things we can accomplish right now and look at larger repairs in the future. Pam suggested doing projects early in the fiscal year. Grace stated that out of the \$17,500 total Cemetery budget, taxpayers would be responsible for \$7500. Andy suggested that we reduce or eliminate the stone wall repair, and focus instead on monument repair. The Cemetery Committee voted to recommend the Draft Budget for 2024 as presented.

Next meeting will be February 12 at 10:30am.

Meeting adjourned at 11:32am.

Brenda Lake, Secretary Pro Tem