



City of Fitchburg, Massachusetts

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CEMETERY TRUSTEE BOARD MEETING MINUTES Thursday, February 18, 2021

2021 MAR 18 AM 11:25
FITCHBURG CITY CLERK

The Cemetery Trustee Board meeting was held remotely via the GoToMeeting platform.

Call to Order: Chair Judith A. Perla called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

Trustee Members Present Remotely: Judith A. Perla, Diane R. Ouellette, and Michelle Sciabarrasi. Andrew J. Hawthorne joined the meeting at 9:42 a.m., and left the meeting at 9:54 a.m.

Trustee Members Absent: Andrienne G. Clark

Others Present Remotely: Jaquelyn R. Poirier – Cemetery Superintendent, Nicolas H. Bosonetto - DPW Commissioner

Public Forum: No one joined the meeting for the public forum.

Welcome: Chair Judith Perla welcomed new Trustee Michelle Sciabarrasi to the board.

Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes: A motion was made by Judith Perla and seconded by Diane Ouellette to approve the minutes from the board meeting held on January 21, 2021. New member Michelle Sciabarrasi abstained from the vote. Vote was 2 in favor, 1 abstention. Minutes approved.

Clerk Diane Ouellette explained that there would be a new procedure for handling the distribution of meeting minutes. The meeting minutes will be distributed to the Trustees, Superintendent Poirier, and Commissioner Bosonetto shortly before the next scheduled meeting. After the minutes have been reviewed and approved, they will be sent to the City Clerk to be posted on the city web site's Agenda Center, then emailed to those who are on the distribution list.

Old Business

Staff Reports: Cemetery Department Report 2/18/2021- Progress report given by Jaquelyn Poirier

Forest Hill

Routine maintenance of grounds

- Equipment maintenance
- Continuing to clean and disinfect vehicles and facilities
- Plowed and shoveled

INTERMENTS	6
INURNMENTS	2
UP RIGHTED MONUMENTS	
UNCOVERED FLAT MONUMENTS	
MONUMENT FOUNDATION MARKING/PHOTOS	1
CATCH BASIN REPAIR/CLEAN	5
FILLED SINK HOLES	
TRIMMED TREES	
TRIMMED SHRUBS	
PHONE/OUTSIDE MEETINGS WITH FAMILIES	42
PAYMENTS - INVOICED/PROCESSED	28
FAMILY GENEALOGY	10

Laurel Hill, South Street, West Street & Dean Hill & Hartwell

Cleanup of branches

Cemetery Staff

- 4 full-time workers – (1 Light Duty out injury since 10/15/2020 – 1 out with COVID from 2/4/2020 to present
- 1 Superintendent

Administration

Routine administration tasks

- Cemetery Software – meetings with CompuTemps –working on cleaning the data for migration – Laurel Hill migration of data in process
- Columbaria area –Engineering will continue to monitor wells - estimated 800 minimum graves. Engineering will work on design over the winter. \$ 175,000 funded for project for roads, retaining wall, landscaping, water and fencing -
- Working with Eagle Scout – sign project Forest Hill – signs have been ordered
- Cogshall scheduling

At the end of her report, Superintendent Poirier added that the fencing on the Mt. Elam Rd. side of Forest Hill had been damaged by the sidewalk tractor during snow plowing. The cemetery crew will repair this in the spring.

Trustee Diane Ouellette is also working with Superintendent Poirier and CompuTemps to facilitate migration of Laurel Hill data into the current cemetery office database. Trustees reviewed an example of the data that was imported.

Sally Cragin – Artists and Ancestors at Forest Hill Cemetery: Judith Perla received a request from Sally Cragin to add an additional performance on each day of the Stratton Players’ Re-enactment and Walking Tour planned for April 17th and 18th in Forest Hill Cemetery. Performance times would be 2:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. on both dates. Diane Ouellette made a motion to approve this request. Michelle Sciabarrasi seconded the motion. 3 in favor, 0 opposed. Motion passed.

Fencing Quotes for North Ave. at Laurel Hill: Superintendent Poirier met with a vendor for Phase III of the fencing at Laurel Hill. Trustees discussed whether to break this phase into separate pieces. See Figure 1, below.



Figure 1 - Laurel Hill Fencing Phase III

The longer of the two fences, along Franklin St. would be 592 feet, and include a gate at the bottom of South Ave., at Franklin & Charles St. The shorter section of fence would be 108 feet along North Avenue, where there is a dangerous embankment, and add a gate at the lower Franklin St. entrance. It will match the fence that was installed on the Laurel St. side in 2018. Costs would be \$7,310.00 for the North Ave. side and \$26,950 for the Franklin St. side.

Andrew Hawthorne joined the meeting at 9:42 a.m. He shared information about having utility poles placed by Unitil to be able to bring electrical service into Laurel Hill. Superintendent Poirier is working on getting quotes to have a pole set.

Discussion on fencing continued. A motion was made by Diane Ouellette and seconded by Andrew Hawthorne to approve funding for the fencing and gate on the North Avenue side of Laurel Hill, at a cost not to exceed \$7,310.00, from the Perpetual Care Expendable Trust Fund Account. 4 in favor, 0 opposed – Motion Passed.

Andrew Hawthorne left the meeting at 9:54 a.m.

Michael Passmore – New England Historic Cemetery Restoration Project, Inc.: Chair Perla received an email from Mr. Passmore with an offer of a free gravestone restoration class that will take place in Winchendon in either April or May. This would teach the cemetery crew how to repair damaged stones. The date has not been set at this time. The email will be forwarded to Superintendent Poirier.

Historical Register: Trustees discussed continuing the efforts to have the cemeteries placed on the Historical Register. Michelle Antaya Sciabarrasi will review all the materials gathered and offer suggestions on next steps to move this process forward.

Ray Dunetz -Landscape Architecture: Trustees expressed frustration at the delays in presenting the plan for expanding Forest Hill to the City Council. Mr. Dunetz presented the Forest Hill Cemetery Master Plan – Phase Two to the Trustees, who approved it in 2018, but it has not been funded by the city. Trustees discussed the possibility of a city-wide awareness campaign that highlights the need for more burial space, or a presentation before the City Council to make them aware of the need for more cemetery space. Superintendent Poirier is still waiting for a definitive answer on the water levels in the area behind the Columbarium to be able to estimate the number of graves that could be available there, and determine the time left in Forest Hill before needing this expansion. Trustees feel that time is of the essence, as waiting until space is needed is not enough time to develop the land, and costs have increased and will continue to increase. DPW Commissioner Bosonetto is putting together a 5-year Capital Improvement Plan for all DPW divisions that would include funding for expansion to the land across Electric Avenue.

Status of Columbarium Area: Engineering will continue to monitor wells and estimated that there could be the potential for at least 800 graves. Engineering is working on the design for this area. \$175,000 has been funded for this project for the roads, retaining wall, landscaping, water and fencing.

The Columbarium units are filling up. Unit # 1 is sold out. There are 27 units left divided between Units 2 & 3. When only 24 units remain, it will be time to purchase another unit.

New Business

Budget FY22: Budget Sub-Committee members Judith Perla and Diane Ouellette reviewed the preliminary FY22 budget via a phone meeting on February 10th. The draft that has been submitted to the Mayor's office was reviewed by Trustees at today's meeting. Changes to the proposed clerk position were discussed.

Proposed Cemetery Projects 2021: Trustees reviewed a list of cemetery projects that were completed in 2020, and proposed projects for 2021 presented by Superintendent Poirier.

2020 CEMETERY YEAR IN REVIEW

Laurel Hill – Replaced informational signage

Laurel Hill – Fencing Phase II completed on South Avenue

Forest Hill - Purchased new funeral signage to control traffic flow during burials

Forest Hill – Eagle Scout Project – (27) new path poles for signs installed

Forest Hill – Installation of new mulch bed in infant grave area

Forest Hill – Expansion –Engineering monitoring groundwater elevations for the addition of graves

Forest Hill – Installation of new curbing in section P and O

Forest Hill – paved island front entrance

Mausoleum – Mason grinded out old mortar joints to make flat flush joints in front and back of mausoleum. Repointed and sealed

Purchased for department –14 x 9 grave boards, 10 x 15 tent, back pack blower, lowering device, and cremated remains presentation table

With COVID 19 it has been an ever changing process in the Cemetery. From servicing families, limiting number of family members at burials, working out payment arrangements, to new procedures for employees and funeral providers. The grounds crew have done an excellent job with limited staff.

2021 CEMETERY PROJECTED PROJECTS

Forest Hill Mausoleum – Outside stairs to be repaired by Monty Tech

Forest Hill Mausoleum – Exterior limestone block needs repointing.
Funding source needed to start process for repointing of mausoleum

Forest Hill Expansion –\$ 175,000 funded for project for roads, retaining wall, landscaping, water and fencing. Engineering will continue to monitor wells should have a clear picture in the spring of how many additional graves estimated at 800 graves. This is increase the longevity of Forest Hill by several years.

Forest Hill Columbaria expansion – start process for new unit

Forest Hill – Eagle Scout Project - installation of signs on poles

Forest Hill – Fence replacement – Rollstone side of cemetery – request CDBG funding

Training of Personnel scheduled - repairing damaged monuments will be taught by Joel Kaddy

Work on Laurel Hill, West Street, South Street, Dean Hill and Hartwell cemeteries on the State and National register of historical places – This will enable funding resources for restoration

Dean Hill, West Street, South Street, Hartwell, Laurel Hill – With Engineering GIS/GPS mapping

Laurel Hill – Installation of new fencing - Phase III

Laurel Hill - Continuing repair of damaged walls and stones

Laurel Hill – Work on security issues

Prepared by J. Poirier

Inquiry for Filming at Dean Hill Cemetery: Chair Perla received an email, forwarded by the Mayor's office, from Mr. Steven DiGiovanni requesting permission to gain access to Dean Hill Cemetery at night to conduct a paranormal investigation to be filmed and posted on YouTube. Trustees, after consulting with the City Solicitor, have previously denied requests to film within the cemeteries at night. Discussion on this centered around safety and this activity being an inappropriate use of the cemetery. Diane Ouellette made a motion to deny this request. Michelle Sciabarrasi seconded the motion. 3 in favor, 0 opposed. Motion passes. Chair Perla will notify Mr. DiGiovanni that his request has been denied.

Events: The next regular meeting will be held at 9:00 am on Thursday, March 18, 2021. If this meeting is held remotely, a link will be provided in the agenda.

Adjournment: There being no further business, Chair Judith Perla adjourned the meeting at 11:05 a.m.

Meeting Schedule 2021:

March 18th

April 15th

May 20th

June 17th

NO MEETINGS in July & August

September 16th

October 21st

NO MEETING in December

Respectfully submitted,

Diane R. Ouellette

Clerk, Trustees of Public Burial Grounds

Distribution:

Cemetery Trustees

Jaquelyn R. Poirier, Cemetery Superintendent

Nicolas H. Bosonetto, Commissioner of Public Works

Gary Withington, Superintendent of Streets

Honorable Mayor Stephen L. DiNatale

Patrick Hare, Mayor's Chief of Staff

Joan David, Administrative Aide to the Mayor

Mary de Alderete, City Clerk

Bernard J. Schultz, Ward 1 Councilor

Amy L. Green, Councilor-At-Large

Tricia Chabot

Peggy Page