

*Jun 17 2021 10:54 am*



# City of Fitchburg, Massachusetts

115 Mt. Elam Road

Fitchburg, MA 01420

OFFICE: 978-345-9578 FAX: 978-345-9686

[www.fitchburgma.gov](http://www.fitchburgma.gov)

## CEMETERY TRUSTEE BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, May 20, 2021

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 9:05 a.m.

**Trustee Members Present Remotely:** Judith A. Perla, Diane R. Ouellette, Andrew J. Hawthorne, Andrienne G. Clark, Michelle Sciabarrasi

**Others Present Remotely:** Jaquelyn R. Poirier – Cemetery Superintendent, Nicolas H. Bosonetto - DPW Commissioner, Kelly Pearson – Leominster Monument Company, Sally Cragin – Stratton Players

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

**Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes:** A motion was made by Andrew Hawthorne and seconded by Andrienne Clark to approve the minutes from the board meeting held on April 15, 2021. Vote was 5 in favor, 0 opposed. Minutes approved.

**Staff Reports: Cemetery Department Report 5/20/2021-** Progress report given by Jaquelyn Poirier

### **Forest Hill**

Routine maintenance of grounds

- Equipment maintenance
- Continuing to clean and disinfect vehicles and facilities
- Started cutting and trimming for season
- Continuing spring clean up
- Cleaned area from stump grinding – loam and seed
- Cleaned up pit area
- Energized water for the season
- Planted summer flowers
- Spring grave compliance clean up
- Completed thatching Forest Hill
- Completed fertilizing Forest Hill
- Completed winter graves – removed fill added loam and grass seed
- Watering winter graves and spring flowers
- Put trash barrels for season

- Mulch out for season
- Plowed and shoveled graves and placed coco mats for walking tour
- Installed Veteran markers
- Helped St. Joseph Cemetery with entombment in mausoleum
- Planted memorial tree in section H

INTERMENTS	4
INURNMENTS	4
UP RIGHTED MONUMENTS	21
UNCOVERED FLAT MONUMENTS	
MONUMENT FOUNDATION MARKING/PHOTOS	8
CATCH BASIN REPAIR/CLEAN	
FILLED SINK HOLES	3
TRIMMED TREES	
TRIMMED SHRUBS	
PHONE/OUTSIDE MEETINGS WITH FAMILIES	76
PAYMENTS - INVOICED/PROCESSED	52
FAMILY GENEALOGY	11

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

Cleanup of branches

Up righted 21 stones – Laurel Hill

Fixed and updated informational sign

**Cemetery Staff**

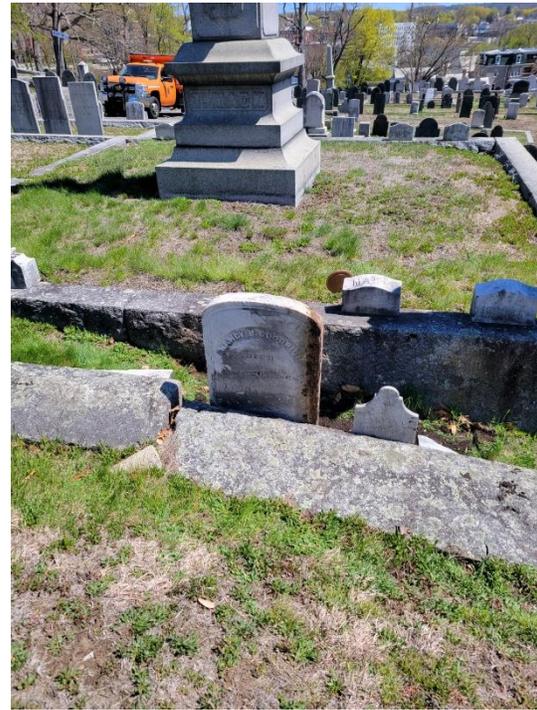
- 4 full-time workers – (1 Light Duty out injury since 10/15/2020)  
(1 out sick since – 5/14/2021)
- 1 Superintendent

**Administration**

Routine administration tasks

- Cemetery Software – meetings with CompuTemps –working on cleaning the data for migration – Laurel Hill migration of data in process
- Coordinated with Washington on Veteran marker issues
- Columbaria area –Meeting with Engineering to design area - \$ 175,000 funded for project for roads, retaining wall, landscaping, water and fencing
- Final meeting with Eagle Scout – sign off on project –letter of recommendation
- Meeting with Recreation Director – Coggsall Reopening plan
- Order new signage for Coggsall maintenance, and trash pickers
- Coggsall schedule
- Meeting with Commissioner and General Foreman to discussion parks transition
- Meeting with Chief Martineau, Captain LeMay and camera company for surveillance at Laurel Hill cemetery
- Memorial Day preparations
- Collection/Reservation calls
- Meeting with Sally Cragin – fall walking tour – Civil War Veterans

- Working with HR – summer hires
- Working with family/funeral home coordinating dis-interment



Laurel Hill stone repairs before and after



203 Veteran flag holders assembled and installed FH



Planted summer flowers at Forest Hill

At the end of the progress report, Superintendent Poirier reported on requests that she had received for two different family monuments to be placed at Forest Hill Cemetery that do not meet the size specifications set by the Trustees in the Cemetery Rules and Regulations. (documents available upon request).

Kelly Pearson, of Leominster Monument Company, was present, and answered questions regarding a bench monument proposed by the Lawrence family for placement on Woodlawn Avenue. Although this is a 4-grave lot, the allowed measurements fall under the specifications for a 2-grave lot because the graves are laid out 2 in front and 2 in back. Those specifications, listed in the Cemetery Rules & Regulations, are 3 feet by 1 foot. The seat on the bench would be 3' 6" .

Trustees expressed concerns about setting a precedent by making an exception to the specifications and maintaining the uniformity and aesthetics of the area. Chair Perla moved for a yes or no vote. Vote was 0 in favor, 5 opposed. This monument was not approved. Kelly Pearson thanked the trustees and left the meeting.

This vote was subsequently revisited due to a lack of second on the motion. Andrew Hawthorne made a motion to deny this request, Andrienne Clark seconded the motion. This vote was 5 in favor (to deny), 0 opposed. Motion passed. The outcome remained unchanged, and the request was denied.

The second request was from Mr. Broderick Kaufhold of Peterborough Marble & Granite Works, LLC. (Documents available upon request). This monument was proposed by the Maack family for placement in Forest Hill Cemetery Section R, for two singles graves that are side by side. This also falls under the specifications for a 2 grave lot. Those specifications are 3 feet by 1 foot. The size of the base is 3 feet 8 inches by 1 foot. Discussion centered on making exceptions to the rules setting a precedent. Andrew Hawthorne made a motion to deny the request. Diane Ouellette seconded the motion. Vote was 5 in favor, 0 opposed. Motion passed and request was denied. Superintendent Poirier will notify Mr. Kaufhold.

### **Old Business**

**Artists & Ancestors Presentation:** Sally Cragin reported that the Artists & Ancestors performances were sold out for all 4 shows held on April 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> and was well received. She thanked both the Superintendent and Trustees for their help. The Stratton Players will make a donation to the Fitchburg Cemetery Department.

Ms. Cragin and the Stratton Players, along with the Fitchburg Historical Society, are working on two more programs for the near future. A Civil War program, "Letters from the Front" to be held at Forest Hill Cemetery, is tentatively scheduled for October 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> of this year. A poetry reading at Laurel Hill Cemetery, to celebrate National Poetry Month in April of 2022 is also in the works.

**Engineering Division Proposed Expansion at Forest Hill Cemetery:** Nick Erickson, Assistant City Engineer, is working on a conceptual layout for the expansion beyond the columbaria area. The area near well # 3 is too wet to be usable. He is working on a design that will produce an optimum number of graves in the usable area. When the layout is completed, it will then be presented to the board.

**Report on Mausoleum Repairs:** There is nothing further to report about needed mausoleum repairs. Superintendent Poirier is waiting to hear from the Facilities Director. Trustees discussed various options to raise money for needed repairs.

**Stone Restoration Training:** No training date has been set at this time.

**Memorial Day Preparations:** Flags will be placed at Forest Hill by cemetery employees and trustees. Boy Scout Troop 41 will also place flags at Forest Hill on Friday, May 28<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, May 29<sup>th</sup>. Laurel Hill flags will be placed by Patricia Chabot, Diane Ouellette and Leo Ouellette.

**Laurel Hill Fencing Installation Date:** The vendor is expecting to receive back-ordered materials in the second week of June and will schedule installation at that time.

**Cemetery Accounts – Mr. Brooks:** Chair Perla met with Mr. Calvin Brooks, City Auditor, to gather more information about cemetery trust funds. She also spoke with the City Treasurer and learned that the trust funds are held by the Rollstone Bank and are invested in safe and stable funds that only pay a low interest rate.

Trustees discussed the process for accessing the funds. Superintendent Poirier explained that the Perpetual Care Trust Fund is governed by state statute, and that Trustees can only utilize the interest on the funds, not the principal. Trustees would like to explore any available options that could produce a higher rate of return on the investments.

**Grant Writers:** Andrew Hawthorne contacted several Fitchburg firefighters who are familiar with grant writing. They have agreed to share their knowledge of the process and help point the Trustees in the right direction at a future in person meeting.

**Legislative Building for Meetings:** Chair Perla stated that although the board will meet in the new legislative building in the future, the June 17<sup>th</sup> meeting will be held remotely.

**Historical Register:** Michelle Sciabarrasi is working on the MHC Burial Ground forms for Laurel Hill. She visited Laurel Hill Cemetery and taken photographs that will need to be submitted with the forms.

### **New Business**

**Historical Commission – Mrs. Ellen DiGeronimo:** Mrs. DiGeronimo has offered to help with the process of having Laurel Hill Cemetery and the Mausoleum at Forest Hill declared Historic sites.

**Sub-committee for Preservation:** Chair Perla formed a new sub-committee for Cemetery Preservation Planning. Michelle Sciabarrasi will Chair the committee. Other members are Judith Perla and Andrew Hawthorne. They plan to meet with Mrs. Ellen DiGeronimo of the Historical Commission over the summer.

**Events:** The next regular meeting will be held virtually on Thursday, June 17, 2021, at 9 a.m. A link will be provided in the agenda.

**Adjournment:** There being no further business, Andrew Hawthorne made a motion to adjourn. Andrienne Clark seconded the motion. Vote was 5 in favor, 0 opposed. Chair Judith Perla adjourned the meeting at 11:15 a.m.

**Meeting Schedule 2021:**

June 17<sup>th</sup>

NO MEETINGS in July & August

September 16<sup>th</sup>

October 21<sup>st</sup>

November 18<sup>th</sup>

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