

Oct 21 2021 12:03 pm



*City of Fitchburg, Massachusetts*  
 TRUSTEES OF PUBLIC BURIAL GROUNDS  
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**CEMETERY TRUSTEE BOARD MEETING MINUTES**  
**Thursday, September 16, 2021**

The Cemetery Trustee Board meeting was held in the East Meeting Room, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor at City Hall, 718 Main St. An online link and phone number were provided for those who wished to participate remotely.

**Call to Order:** Chair Judith A. Perla called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m.

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

**Trustee Members Absent:** Andrienne G. Clark

**Others Present:** Nicholas J. Erickson, PE - Interim Commissioner of Public Works and City Engineer

**Others Present Remotely:** Jaquelyn R. Poirier – Cemetery Superintendent, Sally Cragin – Stratton Players

**Public Forum:** No one was present, either in person or remotely wishing to speak.

**Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes:** A motion was made by Andrew Hawthorne and seconded by Michelle Sciabarrasi to approve the minutes from the board meeting held on June 17, 2021. Vote was 4 in favor, 0 opposed. Motion passed. Minutes approved.

**Staff Reports:**

**Cemetery Department Report 9/16/2021-** Progress report given by Jaquelyn Poirier

**Forest Hill**

Routine maintenance of grounds

- Equipment maintenance
- Cutting and trimming
- Seeded Graves
- Watering graves and flowers
- Cleaned up trash from bike path and cemetery barrels
- Fixed water breaks
- Cleaned up down limbs
- Weed control

INTERMENTS	11
INURNMENTS	9
UP RIGHTED MONUMENTS	3
UNCOVERED FLAT MONUMENTS	2
MONUMENT FOUNDATION MARKING/PHOTOS	33
CATCH BASIN REPAIR/CLEAN	
FILLED SINK HOLES	
TRIMMED TREES	
TRIMMED SHRUBS	3
PHONE/OUTSIDE MEETINGS WITH FAMILIES	92
PAYMENTS - INVOICED/PROCESSED	50
FAMILY GENEALOGY	42

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

Cleanup of branches – change flags as needed – weed control

#### **Cemetery Staff**

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

#### **Administration**

Routine administration tasks

- Cemetery Software – meetings with CompuTemps –working on cleaning the data – Laurel Hill migration of data in process – added ability to attach obituaries to database
- End of Year/Beginning of Year paperwork
- Columbaria area –order grave markers and 2 benches-Engineering working on design – on temporary hold
- Coordinating with Human Resources personnel issues
- Meeting with Funeral Provider – disinterment issues
- Communication with Facilities Director – mausoleum roof – working on scope of work for RFP
- Mausoleum – Richard Demers - Monty Tech – sent request to Jim Hachey- Vocational Director waiting on approval to schedule repair of stairs
- Working with families on grave marker and compliance issues
- Informational meeting with Interim Commissioner
- Organizing fall projects
- Safety – Medical kits serviced for cemetery and Coggs Hall
- Updated Veteran Maps
- Both cars have not passed inspections – 2001 Crown Vic – 2006 Ford -Business
- Attended meeting Fitchburg Historical Commission – Fitchburg cemeteries listed as local historic places
- Laurel Hill/Cemeteries - Video management – meeting with Mayor, Chief of Police, IT, Chief of Staff



Phase III Fence Installation – North Avenue – Laurel Hill Cemetery

During her report, Superintendent Poirier also provided information on the number of full interments versus cremated remains, reserve graves (graves sold pre-need), price comparisons with other local cemeteries and accounts receivables year to year covering years FY11 thru FY21.

Trustees asked questions on the various issues covered. Superintendent Poirier asked that Trustees review current cemetery pricing in anticipation of changes that will need to be made due to manufacturer price increases for both the Memorial Guard and Urn Vault Units. This will be discussed at a future meeting.

Trustee Hawthorne asked about the sharing of labor between the Parks and Cemetery Department. Interim Commissioner Erickson explained that the reorganization of DPW has been placed on hold at this time. The expansion of the area behind the Columbarium was also discussed, along with the need to purchase another Columbarium unit soon, as the second and third units have more than half of the niches sold. That purchase decision will be made once the design of the expansion area is completed.

Superintendent Poirier also provided a proposal for a video surveillance system that is being considered for the Laurel Hill Cemetery to help deter vandalism that continues to occur on the property. After discussing some of the specifics of this proposal, the Trustees asked the Superintendent to gather more information from the company. The Fitchburg Police Department will be placing a temporary video camera within Laurel Hill sometime in October.

**Sally Cragin - Stratton Players:** The Stratton Players are currently in rehearsals for their next show, “Letters From the Front: Fitchburg and the War of the Rebellion”. Performances will be held at Forest Hill Cemetery on October 2nd & 3rd with two performances each day, at 2:00 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. The cast will include 12 actors and a musician. Songs from the Civil War period will be part of the performance.

**Purchase of Veterans’ Flag Holders:** Superintendent Poirier has purchased 130 additional flag holders for the next phase of placement at Forest Hill Cemetery.

**Laurel Hill Cemetery Fencing:** The 3<sup>rd</sup> phase of fencing, along the North Ave. side of Laurel Hill, including a new gate, has been completed.

**Mausoleum Repairs Update:** Facilities Director Russell Karlstad is working on an RFP for repairs needed to the mausoleum roof. Monty Tech is waiting for approval to schedule repairs to the stairs.

**Sub-Committee Preservation Planning Meeting Update:** The Sub-Committee met on July 29<sup>th</sup> to discuss plans to have the cemeteries declared as Historic Sites. It was decided that a letter should be sent to the Fitchburg Historical Commission asking for their support. Michelle Sciabarrasi is continuing work on the forms (Form E) needed for submission to the state.

**Historical Commission Meeting Update:** Chair Perla and Trustee Sciabarrasi attended the Fitchburg Historical Commission meeting held on August 26<sup>th</sup> to ask for their endorsement of deeming the Fitchburg Cemeteries as Historic Sites. The Commission voted to write a letter of endorsement with the stipulation that any typos in the MHC Burial Ground forms are corrected and that a Form E for the Hartwell Cemetery is provided. A draft of the letter has not yet been received.

Cemetery Trustees discussed the possibility of the historic status designation restricting what can and cannot be done when maintaining the cemeteries and the limitations of materials used under historic guidelines that could potentially increase costs. The option of seeking historic status for the smaller cemeteries first was also discussed. Trustee Sciabarrasi will contact Historical Commission Chair Keith Chenot for clarification.

**Events:** The United Way “Day of Caring” will be held at Forest Hill Cemetery on September 17, 2021.

The next regular meeting will be held on Thursday, October 21, 2021, at 9 a.m. at City Hall, 718 Main St., meeting room to be announced.

**Adjournment:** There being no further business, Diane Ouellette made a motion to adjourn and, Michelle Sciabarrasi seconded the motion. Vote was 4 in favor, 0 opposed. The motion passed. Chair Judith Perla adjourned the meeting at 10:59 a.m.

**Meeting Schedule 2021:**

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  
Nicholas J. Erickson, P.E., Interim Commissioner of Public Works & City Engineer  
Gary Withington, Superintendent of Streets  
Honorable Mayor Stephen L. DiNatale  
Patrick Hare, Mayor’s Chief of Staff  
Joan David, Administrative Aide to the Mayor  
City Clerk  
Bernard J. Schultz, Ward 1 Councilor  
Amy L. Green, Councilor-At-Large  
Tricia Chabot  
Peggy Page