

BARRE TOWN CEMETERY COMMISSION  
MINUTES FOR JULY 27, 2022 MEETING  
6:30 P.M., BARRE TOWN MUNICIPAL OFFICE

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CALL TO ORDER

Call to order at the town offices at 6:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Commission members: Alan Garceau, Angela Labrador, Kent Barcomb, Merle Miller, and Dwight Harrington were present; and town manager Carl Rogers and sexton Dwight Coffrin also attended.

Note: The Selectboard approved former commission member Mr. Miller as an interim member of the Cemetery Commission at their 26 July meeting, he volunteered to serve until the open seat is filled.

AGENDA CHANGES - ADDITIONS

Mr. Rogers requested the addition of the year-end budget report.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Mr. Garceau made a motion to approve the agenda as written with the addition of the budget report item, seconded by Ms. Labrador. With no further discussion, the motion carried on a voice vote.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Labrador made a motion to approve the minutes of May 25, 2022 and June 22, 2022 as written, seconded by Mr. Barcomb. With no further discussion, the motion carried on a voice vote.

QUARTERLY BUDGET REPORT

Per the additional agenda item, Mr. Rogers distributed a handout containing the draft year-end Cemetery Fund Summary for the fiscal year 2021 – 2022. The report is marked “Draft” as minor changes may be made through 31 August should they be necessary. The overall revenue and expense page showed cemetery operations ended the year with approximately 7% below the budgeted amounts. Revenues proved strong due to lot sales and the number of burials. On the expense side, the replenishing of the supply of lot pins pushed the miscellaneous expenses over budget and the amount shown for the columbarium construction reserve fund needs to be moved to the proper category. Overall, expenses are 5.2% under budget.

RECEIVE GUESTS

Mr. Chris Neddo attended the meeting as a prospective commission member.

SEXTON REPORT

Mr. Coffrin made reports for the months of June and July. The June report reflected conditions very near the end of the fiscal year. He reported 35 services for the year, eight of them in June, as well as seven lots sold and two niche reservations for the months of May and June. The crew prepared the cemeteries for Memorial Day on schedule. They also performed lawn care throughout June and also took the time to perform maintenance tasks on the equipment.

In the July report, Mr. Coffrin reported the crew had been mowing on a weekly schedule or as needed, but the grounds were beginning to show the effects of drought conditions. He has received the new flag pole light and will be installing it in August. Plantings are being put in but on temporary hold during the recent heat wave. So far, the hydrangea plants are in at the columbaria park and one row of shrubbery has been planted in New Section C at Wilson. Mr. Coffrin said he had been receiving many positive comments on the appearance of the cemeteries, perhaps more than ever, and he is passing those remarks on to the crew. The cemetery crew is also performing maintenance and repair tasks on the mowers and preparing the hedges for general trimming. Mr. Coffrin contacted Matt Peake concerning the fence at Maplewood on 19 July and 20 July but has not had any positive results. Further discussions about the project are recorded in Old Business below.

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APPROVAL OF DEEDS AND MONUMENTS

- A. Deeds:
- Richard and Deana Goodell, Wilson Cemetery, North Section, Lot 84e, 10 x 5
  - Shirley A. Persons, Wilson Cemetery, Section New C, Lot 241, 10 x 8
  - Shirley A. Persons and Durward Persons, Wilson Cemetery, Section New C, Lot 242, 10 x 8
  - Shirley A. Persons, Wilson Cemetery, Section New C, Lot 243, 10 x 8
- B. Niche reservation:
- Dale Finck, Columbarium 4, Side B, Niche 19
  - Robert W. Lewis, Columbarium 2 Side B, Niche 2
- C. Monuments:
- Francis and Mary McFaun, Maplewood Cemetery, Section South 2, Lot 137-1/2
  - Cynthia Wade, Wilson Cemetery, Section New B, Lot 128
- D. Niche covers: None this meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

- A. Washington County Mental Health (WCMH) letter, Gould Cemetery. Ms. Labrador reported the letter of 25 May sent to WCMH resulted in a response via a phone call on 22 June from the overall property manager of the facility. He is willing to do what is needed to protect the site and requested an on-site meeting. Ms. Labrador will coordinate the site visit to include the sexton, Mr. Coffrin, to discuss what needs to be done at the site. A tentative time for the meeting has been set for the end of next week, the 4th or 5th of August. Mr. Garceau and Mr. Harrington will also attend the meeting.
- B. Maplewood fence. Mr. Matt Peake, the contractor who has been working on the fence for the past five years told Mr. Coffrin he will not be finishing the job due to increased labor costs and expenses. The work had been called for under a purchase order and not a contract. Work done to date are several sections along Farwell Street including the main gate posts, but there are about 20 sections still to be done on Farwell Street as well as all the fence along Nichols Road. To save the town some money, Mr. Bob Nelson has donated some paint suitable for the iron fence. Each section of the fence needs to be sandblasted before painting by the cemetery crew, and a check of local sandblast contractors did not find one able to do the work. Ms. Labrador suggested advertising for one on Front Porch Forum and Mr. Rogers suggested checking with the Vermont Cemetery Association. There was a suggestion made to ask Mr. Peake to re-bid the job, but Mr. Rogers said the job just needs to be finished. Ms. Labrador will contact the Vermont Cemetery Association to see if they can recommend a sandblast person and Mr. Harrington will contact the Vermont Old Cemetery Association for the same.
- C. Investigation for new columbarium structure/COVID funds. Mr. Garceau presented a general discussion on the costs associated with the columbaria park. The original work included two units, pavers, and miscellaneous items for a cost of about \$31,000 with an additional \$7,100 for three foundations. The current cost of a single columbarium structure is estimated at \$36,000. Current construction is not all granite, the niche boxes are made of aircraft aluminum and the niche cover is granite. An all-granite structure will be even more expensive. A quarter of a rosette is at each corner with a modified star-bit fastener. Rock of Ages and Granite Artisans (Buttura-Gherardi) are the only Barre granite firms set up to build a structure the size of our columbaria units. Mr. Garceau suggested the commission petition the Selectboard for additional money from the COVID 19 relief fund to offset the cost of a new structure.

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Mr. Coffrin recently worked with an aluminum niche in a private columbarium and said a 12 x 12 inch urn would not pass through the opening at the front of the niche. He explained there was a steel security plate behind the granite face and the "ears" that support the security screws for the plate project into the opening thus limiting it to about 11 x 11 inches. The urn he recently set for a client had to be slightly modified to fit past the ears and if this type niche is used in the proposed unit, the commission would have to address the issue.

Mr. Rogers said the Selectboard had not been accepting COVID fund requests as of late. He recommended the commission get on an agenda and present cost figures and the timeline for constructing the new unit. The cost figures might not be necessary, only a conceptual budget. In response to a question of raising the percentage of the niche reservation fee that goes into the construction fund, a review of the budget report showed an increase would not have a major impact and might lead to a larger than normal price increase for a niche reservation. Mr. Miller suggested lobbying the Selectboard for their support for the project and explain the need for the new unit while at the same time keeping the overall prices to the residents down. According to Mr. Coffrin, if niche price rose too much, it would defeat the purpose of having the columbaria units and the higher prices would drive business away.

On the recommendations of Mr. Rogers, the commission will request to be added to the agenda of one of the later August Selectboard meetings, perhaps on 23 August to present a request for money from the COVID fund to cover the cost of a new unit plus contingencies. This would preserve the current construction funds as a start for the next and much more expensive unit to be purchased in the future. Using the COVID money would fit the criteria of the COVID fund while helping to maintain the current prices for a niche reservation.

#### NEW BUSINESS

- A. Annual Elections for upcoming FY 2022-2023.
- Mr. Garceau nominated Ms. Labrador as chair of the Barre Town Cemetery Commission, seconded by Mr. Miller. No other nominations came forth and Mr. Harrington made a motion to close the nominations, seconded by Mr. Barcomb. Ms. Labrador accepted the nomination and was elected chair on a voice vote.
- As newly elected chair, Ms. Labrador assumed the responsibilities of the office.
- Mr. Miller nominated Mr. Garceau as vice-chair of the Barre Town Cemetery Commission, seconded by Mr. Barcomb. No other nominations came forth and Mr. Barcomb made a motion to close the nominations, seconded by Mr. Miller. Mr. Garceau accepted the nomination and was elected vice-chair on a voice vote with Mr. Garceau abstaining.
  - Mr. Garceau nominated Mr. Harrington as recorder of the Barre Town Cemetery Commission, seconded by Ms. Labrador. No other nominations came forth and Mr. Garceau made a motion to close the nominations, seconded by Mr. Barcomb. Mr. Harrington accepted the nomination and was elected recorder on a voice vote without voting for himself.
- B. Fuller lot swap at Maplewood Cemetery. Mr. Doug Fuller owns a single grave lot in the former Section B of Maplewood Cemetery but would like to swap it for a two grave lot in the South 2 section. The available lots there are 2 grave lots and Mr. Fuller would like to subdivide one for his son and have two monuments on the lot. He could sell his current lot back to the town using the commission's usual procedures and pay the difference for a two grave lot in South 2, or it might be simpler to purchase the two grave lot and put up a single headstone for him and his son. No action taken; Mr. Coffrin will be talking to him again before the next meeting.

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AROUND THE TABLE DISCUSSIONS

The members of the Barre Town Cemetery Commission would like to extend their deepest sympathies to the family of Robert R. "Robie" Pellon, a former member of the team. Robie served his community as a member of the commission for 27 years, between 1988 and his retirement in 2015. He brought a certain dignity to the commission. A quiet person, he would listen to all that the other members had to say before offering his own opinions and guidance on the many issues that confronted the commission. Those of us who remember serving on the commission with him remember Robie as an important member of the group and also as a friend. He helped develop the columbaria park, an important part of the Barre Town cemetery operations, and also asked the first question that started the commission's program to replace unserviceable monuments in the cemeteries' historic sections. He will be missed by all that knew him and worked with him.

NEXT MEETING

Next meeting set for: August 24, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.  
Location: Room 3, Barre Town Municipal Office.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

Mr. Garceau made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Barcomb. With no further discussion, the motion carried on a voice vote and the meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of Angela Labrador, Chair of the commission  
Respectfully submitted on behalf of Alan Garceau, former Chair of the commission  
by Dwight D. Harrington, recorder