

BARRE TOWN CEMETERY COMMISSION
MINUTES FOR OCTOBER 26, 2022 MEETING
6:30 P.M., BARRE TOWN MUNICIPAL OFFICE

CALL TO ORDER

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

ROLL CALL

Commission members: Angela Labrador, Alan Garceau, and Dwight Harrington were present; Kent Barcomb was unable to attend. The commission welcomed its newest member, Brian Littlefield, to his first meeting. Town manager Carl Rogers and sexton Dwight Coffrin also attended the meeting.

AGENDA CHANGES - ADDITIONS

Mr. Garceau requested a discussion under "Around the Table" to address an error discovered in the July 27, 2022 minutes concerning the Lewis columbarium niche.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Garceau made a motion to approve the minutes of September 28, 2022 as written, seconded by Mr. Littlefield. With no further discussion, the motion carried on a voice vote.

QUARTERLY BUDGET REPORT

Mr. Rogers presented the Cemetery Fund Summary for this fiscal year to date, for the period ending September 30, 2022, he had made one pen and ink change under equipment cost. In the expense side of the budget, the amount currently shows 66% of the budget remaining while 75% of the fiscal year remains. This should not be an issue as the cemetery year lasts for six months and is only halfway through at this point. Mr. Rogers went through the detail sheets and explained the numbering system for the budget items. He pointed out one item under buildings and grounds that would be corrected as it contained an error. The budget, overall, is on track. As for the Maplewood Cemetery fence, the amount shown in the report did not represent the inclusion of the previous remaining fund balance. The Selectboard will be creating a category "070" especially for the COVID fund items and the proposed columbarium unit will be included in the buildings and grounds category under the special number.

RECEIVE GUESTS

None this meeting.

SEXTON REPORT

Mr. Coffrin's handed out his written report that listed the cemetery operational data to date for this fiscal year. He reported the shrubs had been trimmed and wrapped with orange silt fence to protect them for the winter. The columbaria units, pavers, and benches have been cleaned with the pressure washer. Lawn mowing has been suspended as the grass has stopped growing for the season. Cemetery employee Gary Munson left the crew in mid-October, and Ray Brown has indicated 2023 would be his last year on the crew; he will remain on staff until sometime in November.

APPROVAL OF DEEDS AND MONUMENTS

- A. Deeds:
- Mathew Premont, Maplewood Cemetery, Section South 2, Lot 24-a, 10 x 4
 - Alexander R. Campbell, Wilson Cemetery, Section G, Lot 172-1/2, 10 x 7
- B. Niche reservation:
- None this meeting.

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- C. Monuments:
-- Laurence Kessenick, Wilson Cemetery, Section New B, Lot 447a, 10 x 8
- D. Niche covers:
-- Robert and Susan Rouse, Wilson Cemetery, Columbarium 4, Side A, Niche 2
-- Robert and Gail Lewis, Wilson Cemetery, Columbarium 2 Side B, Niche 8

OLD BUSINESS

A. Washington County Mental Health Services (WCMHS) site inspection, Gould Cemetery. Mr. Coffrin and crew spent two, five hour days on the site clearing brush and taking down one tree to create a path suitable for hauling material to the grave site. Mr. Garceau and Mr. Harrington took down two additional trees that needed to be removed. The day the final work had been scheduled to be done, October 14th, brought a day-long rain event and no work was accomplished. Tight scheduling and manpower needs have made it necessary to finish the project next spring rather than this fall.

Mr. Coffrin suggested removing the slate stones from the newly opened site and storing them in the Wilson vault for the winter. Having them off site would also allow for an easier repair of the broken slate tablet and closer inspection of the stones. Ms. Labrador said it would be okay provided the location of the stones and other site features could be properly sketched, and measurements taken to the existing site features to accurately restore the stones to their proper locations. Mr. Coffrin and Mr. Harrington will prepare the sketches, make the measurements, and retrieve the stones.

B. Maplewood fence painting. No recent contact has been made with Mr. Pelkey as of this meeting. There is still time during this year to begin the project work as the painting operations will be done indoors. Mr. Pelkey will be contacted again to discuss taking some of the fence panels to his shop this fall; Mr. Coffrin will substitute ropes to fill in any areas where the panels have been removed.

C. Investigation for new columbarium structure/COVID funds. The project plans and specifications has been put out for bids, specifically to Adams Granite, Rock of Ages, and Buttura and Gherardi. Also, an ad appeared in the local paper inviting bids on the project through the town offices. The Barre Granite Association also received copies of the information. Should another manufacturing firm express interest in the project, the association would have the information to give them.

The bids will be opened at 10:30 a.m. on November 10, commission members are invited to attend. The Selectboard will make the final determination at their November 15 meeting, Ms. Labrador, Mr. Littlefield, and Mr. Garceau plan to attend.

D. Status of price and rate increases for cemetery operations. The lot prices have been approved by the Selectboard and the operational fee schedule updated. Mr. Rogers distributed a handout with the new schedule of operations fees and cemetery lot prices. The commission discussed the fee for cremation interments in monument base die or on marker as the fees shown are the same on weekends and holidays as they are for weekdays. Other fees in the schedule change to reflect overtime rates; after the discussion, the commission decided to leave the fees as shown.

Mr. Rogers made the suggestion to include a monument cleaning fee should the cemetery offer it as a service. Mr. Coffrin said \$25 could be charged for a grass marker and a minimum of \$100 for an upright family headstone including the die and the base, depending on the size of the headstone. He would offer his thoughts on setting a standard for a minimum charge and the work up for a larger dollar amount to go with larger headstones. As no monument cleaning is anticipated to be done this fall, the discussion has been tabled until the April 2023 meeting.

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NEW BUSINESS

- A. Recommendations for cemetery operations budget items.
1. An electrical dump cart to be used to haul material for cemetery operations. The cost and the use would be shared with the Recreation Department. An estimate is currently being worked up and will be submitted to Mr. Rogers in the next few weeks.
 2. Mr. Harrington has submitted information on the CAD schematic updates to Mr. Rogers.
 3. Cemetery crew manpower issues. The commission held a discussion concerning the hiring of an “assistant sexton” which could grow into a promotion to sexton once Mr. Coffrin retires. Ms. Labrador pointed out a position with a possible promotion would make the job more attractive and the succession within this job is important. Mr. Rogers said the idea is already in progress and recruitment for such a job description will continue. Mr. Coffrin stressed the need for someone to not only learn cemetery operations but the job is also heavy in public relations and dealing with families. The recruitment of cemetery workers will also continue in the light of the upcoming retirement of Mr. Brown. The work load will be changing somewhat with the hiring of a full time Rec Department director which will leave the sexton in the cemeteries full time. The two crews will still intermingle when workloads require additional workers in either the cemeteries or on the recreation fields. In one such change, the cemetery crew will no longer be doing the playground trash and inspection runs.
- B. Status of pressure washer purchase and columbaria cleaning. In his report, Mr. Coffrin told the commission he had purchased the new pressure washer on the previous day. Mr. Henri Dessureau has been lending his expertise in cleaning monuments and he donated cleaning solution and nozzles for the pressure washer. The pressure washer will be stored in the DPW garage during the off season. The columbaria units, pavers, and benches have been cleaned with a pressure washer. Mr. Harrington, with input from Mr. Coffrin, will prepare a thank you letter to be sent to Mr. Dessureau.

AROUND THE TABLE DISCUSSIONS

- A. Corrections to Cemetery Commission Meeting Minutes of July 27, 2022. An error has been noted in the minutes concerning the niche reservation for Robert W. Lewis. Ms. Labrador made a motion to make the change in these minutes, seconded by Mr. Harrington, and with no further discussion, the motion passed on a voice vote. The minutes currently give the niche designation Col. 2, Side B, Niche 2 but should read Col. 2 Side B, Niche 8. Mr. Harrington will review the deed on file in the town clerk’s office to ensure the deed is also correct. [*Deed checked: 10/27/22: Book 3, Page 458, Lewis, Robert W., Col. 2, Side B, Niche 8.*]
- B. In his last cemetery commission meeting, Mr. Rogers had kind words in his relationship with the group and the many meetings he has attended. The commissioners and Mr. Coffrin offered their own words thanking Mr. Rogers for his guidance and support in cemetery issues and in the special projects undertaken over the years. Mr. Garceau, a 27-year member of the commission, said he could not recall Mr. Rogers ever missing a meeting. Commissioners also thanked Mr. Rogers for his overall service to the Barre Town community.

NEXT MEETING

Next meeting set for: April 26, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.
Location: Room 3, Barre Town Municipal Office.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

Ms. Labrador made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Garceau. With no further discussion, the motion carried on a voice vote and the meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of Angela Labrador, Commission Chair
by Dwight D. Harrington, recorder