

BARRE TOWN CEMETERY COMMISSION
MINUTES FOR OCTOBER 25, 2023 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, Kent Barcomb, and Dwight Harrington were present; Brian Littlefield attended over the internet. Sexton Dwight Coffrin and Town Manager Chris Violette attended the meeting as well.

AGENDA CHANGES - ADDITIONS

Mr. Harrington requested the addition of a discussion on next year's cemetery department budget.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Ms. Labrador made a motion to approve the agenda as written and with the addition; 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 27, 2023 as presented, seconded by Mr. Barcomb. With no further discussion, the motion carried on a voice vote.

QUARTERLY BUDGET REPORT

FY 2023 – 2024. Mr. Violette distributed a handout with both the numbers for Fiscal '23 and Fiscal '24. The year Fiscal '23 ended with revenues well above budgeted amount. The handout also contained budget information for Fiscal '24, actual amounts for each category to date, prior year amounts, and percentages remaining. Mr. Violette answered specific questions concerning amounts shown. The telephone bill from a previous report had been shown in error with a lesser amount shown than the actual budgeted amount. The figures on the current report showed the correct amount and the expense lower than the budgeted amount. The number shown for the columbaria reserve fund showed the amount for seven niches, well above the two niches in the previous budget. Mr. Violette will determine the actual dollar amount in the columbaria fund and provide the information to the commission via email. Currently, 47.5% of each niche reservation goes into the account.

Commissioners held a general discussion on the revenues being higher than the projected amounts and what is done with the excess fund balances. The amounts should be recaptured and used for cemetery needs as a way to offset money requested from taxpayers. Mr. Violette will determine what amount is currently available and have the figure by the end of the calendar year. Mr. Littlefield suggested excess funds could go to the shortage on the Maplewood fence project.

RECEIVE GUESTS

None this meeting.

SEXTON REPORT

Mr. Coffrin presented a detailed report of the cemetery activities up to the date of the meeting. In answer to a question previously asked, Mr. Coffrin said a total of 53 niches had been reserved. His report showed 19 interments for the fiscal year so far, and the crew had set four sets of marker posts, and cleaned two monuments and one marker. The shrubs have been trimmed and wrapped for the

BARRE TOWN CEMETERY COMMISSION
MINUTES FOR OCTOBER 25, 2023 MEETING
6:30 P.M., BARRE TOWN MUNICIPAL OFFICE

winter season and some sunken graves repaired. The crew will be departing for the season by the end of the week. Mr. Munson will be available next week and perhaps a bit longer if needed.

APPROVAL OF DEEDS AND MONUMENTS

- A. Deeds:
 - Jerry Kirk, Wilson Cemetery, Section New B, Lot 200, 10 x 8
 - David E. Martin, Wilson Cemetery, Section New C, Lot 205, 10 x 8

- B. Niche reservation:
 - Jeffrey and Karen Blow, Columbarium 2, Side A, Niche 13

- C. Monuments:
 - None this meeting.

- D. Niche covers:
 - None this meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

- A. Maplewood fence. In his report, Mr. Coffrin noted he had not received the updated proposal from Mr. Senecal for sandblasting and painting the fence at this time.

- B. Columbarium 3 Status. Mr. Garceau contacted Buttura and Gherardi and learned the building of the columbarium unit is continuing and the company planned to have it ready next week. The granite parts have been cut but some assembly is still required. Once the delivery truck arrives on site, the existing granite pavers in the park will have to be protected with plywood. The company will contact the Mr. Coffrin or Mr. Garceau a few days prior to the actual setting of the structure. Once contact is made, an email will go out to commission members with the information. The structure will be set this year but the pavers around its perimeter could wait until next year.

- C. Re-addressing the future build-out plan for the columbaria park. A final footprint document had been prepared and sent to commission members with the agenda. Members reviewed the document and found it to be acceptable. Mr. Barcomb made a motion to accept the layout as shown and have the commission chair sign a copy on behalf of the members, seconded by Mr. Garceau. With no further discussions, the motion passed on a voice vote. Commission chair Labrador signed a copy and Mr. Violette will have the copy placed in the cemetery deed book.

- D. Columbaria foundation layout. With the park layout approved, Mr. Coffrin and Mr. Harrington will put in corner stakes for the foundations of future units One and Five. Mr. Garceau will work towards getting the foundations poured for next season.

- E. Dogwood replacement at the columbarium park. The dogwoods have been removed and four new hydrangea trees planted. The changes opened up the site to a much more visible view and the overall appearance of the park greatly approved.

- F. Washington County Mental Health – Gould Cemetery. The crew went to the site and cut a path from the solar farm through the woods to the grave site. Topsoil has been brought in and the site leveled. The topsoil has been tamped and grass seed spread. The monument foundation has been excavated for re-setting the headstone and Sakrete and low expansion foam has been purchased for the work. It had been determined that trimming the headstone would probably result in damage to the stone so it will be set in the ground in its original condition. Mr. Coffrin and crew will set the monument

BARRE TOWN CEMETERY COMMISSION
MINUTES FOR OCTOBER 25, 2023 MEETING
6:30 P.M., BARRE TOWN MUNICIPAL OFFICE

next week and will also re-set the footstone. The smaller footstone will be dug in and supported with stones rather than be set in concrete. While on site, Mr. Harrington determined the tie points for the headstone location are still in place and available for use if needed.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Budget items for FY '24 – '25. The commission held a general discussion on the cost for the sandblasting and painting of the fence at Maplewood which could be as much as \$20,000. Part of that amount might be found in existing fund balances in the cemetery budget accounts. The fund accounts will be searched for money that can be used to offset amounts requested from tax payers.

Flags for Veterans will not be making a funding request for next year as the organization will be re-using flags found in good condition at the end of this cemetery year.

Mr. Harrington requested money be budgeted for the creation of a formal site plan for the columbaria park based on the approved footprint. The work would be done by a firm such as Chase and Chase. Mr. Harrington would prepare a scope of work to accompany the footprint and submit them to Mr. Violette for consideration. He would also furnish copies of this year's CADD schematic changes scheduled to be done by Chase and Chase, probably as "winter work."

The commission held a general discussion on the wages paid to the various cemetery workers. The issue is handled by the selectmen and the town manager and is partially based in amounts paid for similar work in other departments across the town work force. The wage scales for this type of cemetery work is not generally known, but the information would be helpful to ensure Barre Town offers a competitive wage, particularly in these times when there is a shortage of workers. Ms. Labrador also discussed the hiring of an assistant sexton to work under Mr. Coffrin. That person's job would be linked to the cemeteries and not to similar workers in other town departments. Mr. Coffrin plans to work two more seasons before retirement.

AROUND THE TABLE DISCUSSIONS

Mr. Garceau complimented Mr. Coffrin and the cemetery crew on their great work for the year and the fine appearance of the cemeteries. He particularly addressed how much the cedar trees throughout Wilson Cemetery had recovered from previous years of deer damage.

Mr. Coffrin thanked the commission members for their support and mentioned he would be working two more seasons before his retirement.

NEXT MEETING

Next meeting set for: April 24, 2024 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 8:06 p.m.

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