

BARRE TOWN CEMETERY COMMISSION
MINUTES FOR JUNE 26, 2019 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: Alan Garceau, Norman Coates, Angela Labrador, Robert Benoit, and Dwight Harrington in attendance. Carl Rogers, town manager, and sexton Dwight Coffrin also attended.

AGENDA CHANGES - ADDITIONS

Details: Mr. Harrington asked that the recent proposal by Dennis Beaudin to clean three monuments be added. Mr. Garceau asked that the annual elections for commission member positions be added.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Mr. Garceau made a motion, seconded by Mr. Coates, to approve the agenda as presented and amended. With no further discussion, the motion carried on a voice vote.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Coates made a motion, seconded by Ms. Labrador, to approve the minutes of the May 22, 2019 meeting as written. With no further discussion, the motion carried on a voice vote.

QUARTERLY BUDGET REPORT

None this meeting.

RECEIVE GUESTS

None this meeting.

SEXTON REPORT

Mr. Coffrin reported 24 interments total for the fiscal year 2018-2019, 19 were cremains and five were full burials. The crew has been mowing and trimming as weather permits. The new mower broke down and took two weeks to repair. The machine had a hydraulic fluid issue, the mower has been repaired and is now back in service. A monument has been knocked over by a driver in Wilson Cemetery. There was no permanent damage to the monument and no injuries to the driver. The monument will be re-set as time permits. Mr. Coffrin also provide the commission members with a list of price increases for operational fees, columbaria niches, and cemetery lots. Prices have remained the same since 2017. The increases will be discussed at the July commission meeting.

APPROVAL OF DEEDS AND MONUMENTS

- A. Deeds: Jessica Rollins, Lot 158, New B, Wilson, 10 x 8
Shelley, Christopher, Diane, Sherman Cochran, Lot 175, New B, Wilson, 10 x 8
Shelley, Christopher, Diane, Sherman Cochran, Lot 188, New B, Wilson, 10 x 8
- B. Niche reservation: Carol Fuller, Side B, Niche 4, Columbarium 2
- C. Monuments: Jessica Rollins, Lot 158, New B, Wilson, 10 x 8
Shelley Cochran, et. al., Lots 175 & 188, New B, Wilson, combined to 10 x 16 lot
- D. Niche covers: none this meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

- A. Ms. Labrador did not have the opportunity to participate in the webinar that featured the cleaning of cemetery monument, but she does have a link to the sponsor's latest information available to anyone interested.
- B. Ms. Labrador attended the May 9th meeting of the Old Cemetery Association held at the Canadian Club in Barre. She shared her experiences with the commission and talked about the presentation concerning cemetery laws as explained by Vermont attorney James Barlow. He has published an FAQ document that addresses various topics within the law. The discussion also included recent problems within non-profit organizations that can no longer survive in today's economic climate. Should the non-profit cease to exist, the towns are not required to take up ownership of the cemeteries the non-profit had cared for. Towns must answer questions raised by the general public concerning cemeteries within state mandated timeframes. They do not have to provide research, only access to the public records. Town clerks do not usually have many records for private cemeteries. Another topic featured business models that consider cremations and green burials. Barlow discussed recent case laws pertaining to liability. Cemeteries are required to have postings warning the public about various hazards such as fences and sinkholes around old graves. He also discussed specific wording for deeding property that includes a private burial ground.
- C. Vault doors. Mr. Henri Dessureau quoted \$250 or less to sandblast the vault doors at Wilson, both inside and out.

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- D. Plantings. Mr. Coffrin picked up the first 30 privet shrubs from the White River Nursery, planting them will begin within two weeks. As no salesmen were available when he picked them up, Mr. Coffrin will check prices on apple trees to replace damage cedars when he returns to the nursery to pick up the remaining privet shrubs.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Dennis Beaudin proposal to clean three monuments. Mr. Harrington presented a package of photos of the three monuments and other monuments within the cemetery that appeared to be in more need of cleaning. During the discussions, Ms. Labrador asked for the definition of perpetual care, in this context it refers to the cemetery lots, not the monuments. Mr. Garceau commented the discolorations and growth on the stones make up part of the character of the cemeteries. Mr. Coates said cleaning stones owned by private individuals would set a bad precedent for the commission. Also, to clean the stones, the commission would have to obtain permission from the descendants of the monument owners. Mr. Rogers asked how cleaning privately owned stones differed from replacing old gravestones. Mr. Garceau said the replacements are for stones no longer readable and the new ones mark the location of the person's grave. Mr. Harrington commented the replacements are a better alternative than leaving a blank space over the grave. Ms. Labrador inquired as to whether the commission sought out descendants for the replacement of old stones. The commission did not as there are little to no old records available and the stones being replaced are too far back in the cemetery history. Should a family complain about the replacement and can prove a family connection, the commission could always remove the replacement.

Town Clerk Donna Kelty furnished the commission with a list of donations to the cemetery over the past few years as a possible funding source for cleaning monuments. Mr. Rogers also said that left over monies from the cemetery fund stay in the cemetery fund. Mr. Harrington stated he would rather see the money used to make improvements in the historic section of the cemetery or for some project that would benefit cemetery employees. Ms. Labrador asked if the commission had done outreach to the community concerning the cleaning of gravestones. The commission has not, but articles could be placed in the town newsletter, on the town webpage, or in the local newspapers. Mr. Garceau added that tracking down families is extremely difficult as most are scattered beyond the local area or have passed away. Mr. Coffrin recommended cleaning be done by professionals and he would recommend some should he be asked by a family to have their monuments cleaned.

Mr. Garceau made a motion to decline Mr. Dessureau's proposal to clean three monuments at the Wilson Cemetery, Mr. Coates seconded. The motion carried on a voice vote.

- B. Annual elections.
Cemetery Commission Chairman: Mr. Coates nominated Mr. Garceau, seconded by Ms. Labrador. Mr. Benoit called for the closure of nominations. On a voice vote, commission members re-elected Mr. Garceau as the chair.

Cemetery Commission Vice Chairman: Mr. Garceau nominated Mr. Coates, seconded by Mr. Benoit. On a voice vote, commission members re-elected Mr. Coates as the vice chair.

Cemetery Commission Recorder: Mr. Garceau nominated Mr. Harrington, seconded by Mr. Coates. On a voice vote, commission members re-elected Mr. Harrington as the recorder.

AROUND THE TABLE DISCUSSIONS

- A. Mr. Coates has been re-appointed by the selectmen for another five-year term.
B. Ms. Labrador will miss the July meeting due to business travel obligations.

NEXT MEETING

Next meeting set for: July 24, 2019 at 6:30 p.m.
Place: Room 3, Barre Town Municipal Office, Websterville.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

Mr. Coates made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Garceau. The motion carried on a voice vote and the meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of Alan Garceau, Chairman
by Dwight D. Harrington, recorder