

Minutes for the March 2022 Meeting of the Harwich Cemetery Commission

The meeting of the Harwich Cemetery Commission was held and videotaped at the Donn B. Griffin Room, Town Hall, 732 Main Street, Harwich, on March 1, 2022.

Commissioners Steven Conner, Cynthia Eldredge, Robert Thompson and Administrator Robbin Kelley were in attendance.

The meeting was called to order by Steve Conner at 9:04 a.m.

Carol Coppola: The revolving accounts were discussed with no action taken by the selectboard.

Julie Kavanagh, selectman, stated that Don Howell, selectman, is looking for more information on revolving accounts.

Robbin stated that our report shows the public what we have done this year and how we have spent money.

The perpetual care account: The income stays in the account. Only the interest can be spent. This is separate from the revolving account.

Robbin's request for a part time assistant was removed by the town administrator as was the request for another laborer, by Lincoln Hooper, DPW. We have only had two laborers for the past twenty years.

Robbin stated the Cemetery Department is taking in more revenue each year.

Robbin's budget is included in the DPW. Rob asked Julie if there will be a re-alignment of who is responsible for what? (DPW/Cemetery Dept.) Julie stated you would have to ask Meggan, Assistant Town Manager or Joe Powers, Town Manager about that. We had 100 burials last year and this year we have had 35 and it is only March. We will have more each year which means eventually we will need more workers. Lincoln Hooper stated the Cemetery Department needs three vehicles replaced. We have discussed the idea of outsourcing our mowing. Many municipalities are hiring landscape companies. Steve talked to Shawn from the golf course about looking into slower growing grass seed.

Bank Street Cemetery: There are cement boundaries now. Neighbors have encroached on the cemetery. The fence cannot be installed until the abutters have received the letter from the town administrator, which has not been written yet. Julie stated that we may not need a letter from the town's attorney as we have a plot plan from Paul Sweetser and nothing has changed. There is money in the budget for the split rail fence. Julie said the letter may or may not be needed but it would be neighborly to notify them with a letter from Joe or Meggan.

Mt. Pleasant Cemetery: Still waiting to have fence repaired or replaced.

Signage: We have installed one per year or two. We will need a smaller one for Bank Street Cemetery.

Rules and Regulations: They have been sent to Joe for a place holder for town meeting's warrant. Robbin wasn't sure how to submit them as usually the original document it submitted with strikeouts/changes and the new document. There are so many changes that it would be difficult and lengthy. Rob stated we made the rules more definitive and much clearer. (Julie's recommendations were not audible on the video) Robbin will send it to Joe and ask if there is a way to send it that is not so lengthy.

Robbin explained to Julie she had an incident at an Island Pond funeral recently that clearly showed we needed to revise our rules. A guy came rolling in loudly on a skateboard during the graveside service and Robbin spoke to him. He swore loudly at her and flipped her off and this alerted the grave digging crew to come to her assistance. She called the police as she felt very threatened and was thankful the men were there.

Robbin stated perhaps we should state in the rules and regulations that funerals will not be held on weekends unless it cannot be avoided. She does not want to work on weekends. Rob stated therefore Robbin needs an assistant Julie. If a DPW worker covers for Robbin they get paid time and a half on a weekend, with a four-hour minimum. If Robbin works on a weekend, she does not get paid. Rob stated it is critical that Robbin has coverage. Robbin told Julie that when she was in Ireland on an 11-day family vacation she had calls from work every day. Julie said the Board of Selectmen should know the extenuating circumstances of Robbin's job and how necessary an assistant would be. She thanked all of us for our service on the Cemetery Commission. Cindy asked Julie if there are other departments that do not have someone cross trained for their job. The administration wanted the commissioners to cover for her and we refused as we are not trained to do her job properly or mark out a grave. We couldn't be responsible for covering for her! Meggan Eldredge was going to cover for her, and she realized it was too much for her to be responsible for as well.

Robbin stated the rules and regulations look great!

Robbin would like to get a price for mapping Evergreen and Mount Pleasant Cemeteries to add to the application. Rob would like to get the cost to add all the other cemeteries.

The Civil War Dedication in North Harwich Cemetery will probably be this summer as Duncan Berry is waiting to receive the plaque to be presented.

Veteran's Memorial: The granite flag base is going to cost \$20,000.00. The cost is going up and with the increase in deaths the monument companies are all behind schedule. We will probably have to rebid the job. They couldn't verify a delivery date. Gas prices are up and delivery would be more expensive now.

We could use a rock for a base instead which would be less expensive but not as good looking. Robbin hopes to have it done by September. Cindy stated she doesn't think we can get it in time for Veteran's Day but she wishes it was possible.

If we put the software information regarding the Island Pond Cemetery and Marceline Arboretum on the Town of Harwich website people can download the mobile app from the app store.

We hope to have a QR code posted at the pollinator garden at the entrance to Island Pond and the Arboretum, welcoming people to the cemetery and arboretum. Robbin will ask Steve Lipman about adding the QR code to the software.

AmeriCorps will be cutting back the trails Thursday and they will be planting the Native Species Garden later, at the back of the cemetery.

Steve made a motion to accept the Rules and Regulations as written. Cindy seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Bills: the arborist removed lots of hangers from the storm in Island Pond. Two new signs for the trails, and Robbins mileage. Three deeds to be signed for Island Pond Cemetery. Robbin stated we have a lot of room for expansion in the cemeteries. North Harwich: on the back side, Pine Grove: across the street, new area in Kelley Street Cemetery. Island Pond and Evergreen are the only cemeteries with cremation lots. There could be more along the fence in Mount Pleasant as well. We would like to have digitized maps of the cemeteries. Robbin will ask Dan from the Water Department if he could do this for us. Robbin had done some GPR work for them, and they might return the favor.

Cindy asked Robbin if the DPW ever uses the V-plow we purchased for them. If not, could we sell it? Robbin will follow up.

Steve asked Robbin if she will be caught up on Monthly Minutes by next meeting. She promised 2-3 months.

Next meeting: April 5, 2022

Steve made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:15, and Cindy seconded. Motion was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted: Cynthia Eldredge

Approved at November 1, 2022 meeting.