



*City of Fitchburg, Massachusetts*  
**TRUSTEES OF PUBLIC BURIAL GROUNDS**  
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**CEMETERY TRUSTEE BOARD MEETING MINUTES**  
**Thursday, February 17, 2022**

The Cemetery Trustee Board meeting was held in the West Meeting Room, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor at City Hall, 718 Main St. An online link and phone number were provided for those who wished to participate remotely.

**Call to Order:** Chair Judith A. Perla called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m.

**Trustee Members Present:** Judith A. Perla, Diane R. Ouellette, Andrew J. Hawthorne, Michelle Sciabarrasi

**Others Present Remotely:** - Jaquelyn R. Poirier – Cemetery Superintendent, Nicholas J. Erickson, PE - Commissioner of Public Works

**Public Forum:** No one was present, either in person or remotely, wishing to speak.

**Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes:** A motion was made by Andrew Hawthorne and seconded by Michelle Sciabarrasi to approve the minutes from the board meeting held on January 20, 2022. Vote was 4 in favor, 0 opposed. Motion passed. Minutes approved.

**Staff Reports:** **Cemetery Department Report 2/17/2022-** Progress report given by Jaquelyn Poirier

**Forest Hill**

Routine maintenance of grounds

- Equipment maintenance
- Cleaned graves to comply with specifications
- Pick up down limbs from all cemeteries
- Processed sand at pit for graves
- Training new employee
- Plowing and shoveling
- Cleaning off catch basins
- Clean mausoleum drains

INTERMENTS	14
INURNMENTS	
UP RIGHTED MONUMENTS	
UNCOVERED FLAT MONUMENTS	

MONUMENT FOUNDATION MARKING/PHOTOS	
CATCH BASIN REPAIR/CLEAN	20
FILLED SINK HOLES	7
TRIMMED TREES	
TRIMMED SHRUBS	
PHONE/OUTSIDE MEETINGS WITH FAMILIES	34
PAYMENTS - INVOICED/PROCESSED	27
FAMILY GENEALOGY	12

**Laurel Hill, South Street, West Street & Dean Hill & Hartwell**

Cleanup of branches

**Cemetery Staff**

- 4 full-time workers
- 1 Superintendent

**Administration**

Routine administration tasks

- Cemetery Software – meeting with CompuTemps
- Columbaria area – meeting with Commissioner and Engineering concept design with topography 40 % complete- Engineering will be working on finishing up grant – to be used for wall vendor \$ 25,000.00
- Facilities Director – mausoleum roof – working on scope of work for RFQ – Office and Garage
- Richard Demers - Monty Tech – Jim Hachey- Vocational Director waiting on approval to schedule repair of stairs
- Payment arrangements with families
- Working on departmental forms
- End of calendar year, beginning of calendar year paperwork
- FY23 Budget
- Staffing Study

**Anticipated Projects List for 2022:** Superintendent Poirier provided a review of projects completed in 2021 and a list of projects anticipated for completion in 2022. See below:

**2021 CEMETERY YEAR IN REVIEW**

With limited staffing it has been a challenge to keep the grounds maintained and burials on schedule. I am proud to state that my staff has not taken any time off during the duration of this pandemic. We did not go on alternate weeks, or any days off. We have kept all burials on schedule. I continue to meet face to face with all families following all safety precautions.

Coordinated with local funeral providers with COVID 19 – adhering to changing State guidelines

Working payment arrangements with families impacted by COVID 19

Eagle Scout project completed with path signs at Forest Hill

Continuing to work with Facilities Director on cemetery buildings – concentrating on mausoleum issues

Departmental forms – revamping old forms, implementing new License of Burial Form

Database upgrades – incorporating interment order, obituary, burial permits, certificate of death, and notes

Starting adding Laurel Hill data into current database

Video management – Laurel Hill surveillance

Historical Register – gathered information for committee

Laurel Hill Fence – Phase III – North Avenue completed

Construction of new leaf box

Walking Tours – Stratton Players working with Sally Cragin with regard to the logistics– Artists and Ancestors – April 17 & 18<sup>th</sup> – Letters from the Front – October 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>

203 Veteran flag holders assembled and installed at Forest Hill

Memorial Guard – after testing product – added product to inventory for families

Worked with Commissioner on design of new area in Forest Hill

FULL INTERMENTS	60
INURNMENTS	46
UP RIGHTED MONUMENTS	73
UNCOVERED FLAT MONUMENTS	4
MONUMENT FOUNDATION MARKING/PHOTOS	115
CATCH BASIN REPAIR/CLEAN	92
FILLED SINK HOLES	22
TRIMMED TREES	24
TRIMMED SHRUBS	3
PHONE/OUTSIDE MEETINGS WITH FAMILIES	484
PAYMENTS - INVOICED/PROCESSED	362
FAMILY GENEALOGY	189

## 2022 CEMETERY PROJECTS

Laurel Hill Fencing – Phase IV – Franklin Street side with gate at Charles

Laurel Hill – Work on security issues – installation of new solar lights at entrances

Continue migration of data into database for Laurel Hill

New bench installation - Forest Hill Cemetery

Work with Engineering - Completing design of new area

New columbaria expansion– design and purchasing process

Forest Hill Expansion - \$ 175,000 funded for project for roads, retaining wall, landscaping, water and fencing.

Forest Hill Expansion – Master Plan – Phase II – Design funding

Continuing to work with Facilities Director on building needs

Installation of Veteran flag holders

**Response from Solicitor Pusateri on Stratton Players:** The question of charging a fee for performances within the cemeteries was discussed at the last meeting. Chair Perla emailed City Solicitor Pusateri to see if this would be an allowed practice. His response is that this would require an ordinance change, and that he would not support this fee.

**Budget Sub-Committee for FY23 Budget:** Chair Perla and Trustee Sciabarrasi will meet with Superintendent Poirier and DPW Commissioner Erickson in the conference room at the DPW, 301 Broad St., on February 22<sup>nd</sup> at 11 a.m. to go over the proposed FY23 budget.

**Trevor Bonilla report for Camera System for Laurel Hill Cemetery:** Mr. Bonilla was not available for this meeting. Commissioner Erickson will contact him for an update on the camera system.

**American Rescue Plan (ARPA) Funding 2<sup>nd</sup> Round of Money (Addressing Public Health):** Trustees would like to revisit the application process and criteria for ARPA funding. Commissioner Erickson will contact Tom Skwierawski at the Community Development office for more information.

**Preservation of Cemeteries Subcommittee to look into Grants:** Trustee Sciabarrasi stated that she has been unable to locate any preservation grants that the cemeteries would qualify for at this time but will continue looking for same. She stated that most cities and towns are either using CDBG or Community Preservation Act funding for cemetery restorations.

A discussion followed on whether to focus on just the mausoleum in Forest Hill, since it is in dire need of repairs and restoration. The roof is leaking and the building needs repointing. There are problems with the windows and interior restoration work is also needed. Trustees are frustrated with the process to secure money for repairs and feel that a letter to the Mayor and presentation before the City Council should be used to highlight these needs and make repair of the mausoleum a city priority.

**Events:** The next regular meeting will be held on Thursday, March 17, 2022 at 9 a.m. in the West Meeting Room at City Hall, 718 Main St.

**Adjournment:** There being no further business, Diane Ouellette made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and Andrew Hawthorne seconded the motion. 4 in favor, 0 opposed. The motion passed and Chair Judith Perla adjourned the meeting at 10:20 A.M.

**Meeting Schedule 2022:**

March 17<sup>th</sup>

April 21<sup>st</sup>

May 19<sup>th</sup>

June 16<sup>th</sup>

NO MEETINGS in July & August

September 15<sup>th</sup>

October 20<sup>th</sup>

November 17<sup>th</sup>

NO MEETING in December

Respectfully submitted,

Diane R. Ouellette

Clerk, Trustees of Public Burial Grounds

Distribution:

Cemetery Trustees

Jaquelyn R. Poirier, Cemetery Superintendent

Nicholas J. Erickson, P.E., Commissioner of Public Works & City Engineer

Gary Withington, Superintendent of Streets

Honorable Mayor Stephen L. DiNatale

Natalia Oliver, Mayor's Chief of Staff

Joan David, Administrative Aide to the Mayor

Amanda Alford, Provisional City Clerk

Bernard J. Schultz, Ward 1 Councilor

Amy L. Green, Councilor-At-Large

Tricia Chabot

Peggy Page