

Apr 22 2022 9:44 am



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

The Cemetery Trustee Board meeting was held in the West Meeting Room, 1st 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 8:56 a.m.

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

Others Present: Tom Skwierawski – Executive Director, Planning & Community Development

Others Present Remotely: - Jaquelyn R. Poirier – Cemetery Superintendent, Michelle Sciabarrasi - Trustee

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 February 17, 2022. Vote was 4 in favor, 0 opposed. Motion passed. Minutes approved.

Staff Reports:

Cemetery Department Report 3/17/2022- 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
- Plowing and shoveling
- Cleared catch basins
- Cleaned sand and trash on bike path
- Cleaning off catch basins
- Cleaned & opened mausoleum roof drains
- Oil change T-26 & T27
- Cleaned and organized garage
- Fixed hoses for water spigots

INTERMENTS	3
INURNMENTS	
UP RIGHTED MONUMENTS	
UNCOVERED FLAT MONUMENTS	
MONUMENT FOUNDATION MARKING/PHOTOS	2
CATCH BASIN REPAIR/CLEAN	
FILLED SINK HOLES	5
TRIMMED TREES	
TRIMMED SHRUBS	
PHONE/OUTSIDE MEETINGS WITH FAMILIES	22
PAYMENTS - INVOICED/PROCESSED	30
FAMILY GENEALOGY	44

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

Cleanup of trash and limbs

Fixed gate at Laurel Hill

Cemetery Staff

- 4 full-time workers

- 1 Superintendent

Administration

Routine administration tasks

- Cemetery Software – meetings with CompuTemps – data base additions and edits
- 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
- Updated cemetery inventory
- Installation of new decal for 2018 Truck
- Budget meeting with Commissioner, Business Manager and Trustee sub-committee
- Meeting with Staffing Study
- Working with Sally Cragin on Civil War Project

Superintendent Poirier informed us of a request by former Cemetery Trustees Don Lassila and Phil Jordan to locate bronze Civil War vases and other gravestone markers that have been in storage for many years. The bronze Civil War vases were purchased by the city in 1872 to be placed at Veterans' gravesites in Laurel Hill Cemetery in 1873.

Trustees had many questions about the interest in these items including the possibility of having them appraised and auctioned off. Lending them to the Fitchburg Historical Society, as opposed to donating them, was also discussed.

Superintendent Poirier will provide an inventory and photos of these markers at the next meeting and check with the City Solicitor for guidance on how to handle these historical items.

Tom Skwierawski – Executive Director, Planning & Community Development – ARPA Funding:

Trustees had many questions about the criteria for ARPA funding, as the Cemetery Department was definitely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Superintendent Poirier stated that sales of lots have doubled. Much of this increase was due to Covid-19 deaths. Additionally, many more people are purchasing lots on a pre-need basis, motivated by the possibility of a Covid-19 death. Since space in Forest Hill Cemetery is limited, this has accelerated the timeline for expansion. Trustees would like to apply for ARPA money to help fund the expansion.

Mr. Skwierawski provided an overview of the recent ARPA funding disbursements and explained the process for the next round of funding. Applications for this will open early next year.

Update on License of Burial – Attorney Questions: All edits have been completed and the new License of Burial forms have been finalized. The Superintendent started using the forms as of March 1st.

Price increase packets for Funeral Directors: Area Funeral Directors have all received packets with the new cemetery price increases.

Budget Update Review: The preliminary FY23 budget has been submitted to the Mayor's office.

Memorial Day Planning: Planning for Memorial Day is in the early stages, and more on this will be discussed at the next meeting.

Updates on Video Presentation:

Trustee Sciabarrasi shared a draft of the history of the Forest Hill Abbey, the mausoleum, which was dedicated in 1920. The history will be used as a starting point for the video presentation to be presented to the City Council to highlight the importance of funding repairs to the mausoleum. Chair Perla asked all Trustees to email their concerns and any information they have about the mausoleum to Trustee Sciabarrasi to help with the presentation. This information will be discussed at the next meeting, as we work towards a final presentation.

Due to remote technical difficulties, Michelle Sciabarrasi left the meeting at 10:25 a.m.

Events: The next regular meeting will be held on Thursday, April 21, 2022 at 9 a.m. in the West Meeting Room at City Hall, 718 Main St.

Adjournment: There being no further business, Andrew Hawthorne made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and Diane Ouellette seconded the motion 3 in favor, 0 opposed. The motion passed and Chair Judith Perla adjourned the meeting at 10:36 A.M.

Meeting Schedule 2022:

April 21st

May 19th

June 16th

NO MEETINGS in July & August

September 15th

October 20th

November 17th

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