

Town of Charleston
Cemetery Commission Meeting 11/15/22
MINUTES

A meeting of the town Cemetery Commission was held November 15, 2022. Attending were Commission Members Sherman Allen Jr., Dean Bennett, Martin Davis, and Darald Moulton; Appointee Janice Bowen; Sexton/Laborer Brad Peters; Town Clerk & Treasurer Teri Gray; and Asst. Clerk Colleen Kellogg.

THESE MINUTES ARE UNOFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVED AT THE NEXT MEETING

Chairperson Sherman Allen called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm and welcomed all attendees.

Sherm Allen corrected a typo in the minutes of the May 12th meeting. On the second page, the last sentence of the first paragraph should read, "Mr. Peters confirmed that he will still *install* the posts." Dean Bennett moved to approve the minutes of the May 12, 2022 meeting as corrected, with a second by Darald Moulton, and the minutes were approved as corrected. There was no public comment.

With Maurice Cerutti's resignation there is a vacant seat on the Commission. Mr. Moulton moved to appoint Janice Bowen to fill the seat until Town Meeting, with a second by Mr. Bennett, and unanimously approved.

With agreement of all Commissioners, Brad Peters was given permission to speak as needed on any cemetery issues and needs.

Mr. Peters said the shed roof at West Village Cemetery needs to be replaced; water has been pouring in when it rains. He caulked the roof to get it through the winter. It's an 8x12 shingled roof and the plywood is still good. Steel fence posts will be needed next year. The carburetor on the West Village mower was replaced, but it's still having issues. Over the winter he will clean the idle circuit and the carburetor so there is a spare. Commission members agreed that a replacement mower will be needed in 2023. Mr. Peters suggests going with a 42" deck like the other Husqvarna and Snapper mowers because they are better around the headstones. Mr. Peters said he collected around 130 flags. Mr. Allen knows of a gentleman who refurbishes flags and will also take damaged flags for proper disposal. Mr. Peters confirmed that the number ordered in 2022 will be needed in 2023. Ms. Gray will look up the order information to help Mr. Allen place the order in the spring.

As the labor rate has been \$15/hour for a number of years, Mr. Bennett moved to increase the hourly rate to \$16/hour, with a second by Darald Moulton, and the increase was unanimously approved.

A 2022 Budget report was reviewed and Commissioners discussed budget needs for 2023, including increased wages, mower purchase, increased gas prices, and a new shed roof. With agreement of all members, the following line items will be proposed to the Selectboard:

- Wages: \$9500, with a corresponding increase in Social Security and Medicare

- Flags: \$175
- New Equipment: \$3000 for new ride-on mower
- Repairs & Supplies: \$2000 to include a new shed roof
- Gasoline & Oil: \$1000
- Fencing: \$100

Requested at the previous meeting, Ms. Kellogg read aloud a draft article that the Commission might place on the Town Meeting Warning to add stone cleaning to the Cemetery budget.

Shall the voters support an annual line item in the cemetery budget of \$XXX for stone cleaning as part of regular cemetery maintenance. If approved, this will affect the 2024 budget.

There was discussion of various cleaning methods; Brad Peters cleans by hand and Heritage Memorials uses a pressure washer. Mr. Peters said the cleaning lasts about 3-5 years. Teri Gray asked how stones would be chosen for cleaning; Sherm Allen suggested that the article specify stone cleaning at the Cemetery Commission’s discretion. Janice Bowen said she found a grant contact through her work at the Historical Society Museum, and she is working on a grant to fund headstone cleaning. Research is needed to determine whether an hourly rate or job price is more cost effective. Mr. Allen asked Brad Peters to find out more about Newport’s cleaning project, and Janice Bowen will find out about Westmore’s. All agreed that more information was needed about the process, costs and possible grants, and the matter was tabled until more is known.

Janice Bowen raised the matter of Charleston Cemetery’s Perpetual Care Fund, the principal of which cannot be touched. Commission members agrees that the fund doesn’t provide much interest anymore. Teri Gray explained that the commission could vote to contribute a lesser amount from lot sales to perpetual care. Mrs. Bowen wondered if a separate, accessible CD could be opened. Teri will look into what is required, if some amount must go into Perpetual Care, etc. The matter was tabled until the May meeting when more information is available.

Seeing no other business, Mr. Bennett moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Moulton, and the meeting adjourned at 6:01pm. The next meeting will be held in May 2023.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sherman Allen, Jr. Chairperson

Approved this _____ day of _____, 20_____

Cemetery Commissioners, Town of Charleston