

TOWN OF CHARLESTON
Cemetery Commission Meeting 11/13/2025

MINUTES

A meeting of the town Cemetery Commission was held November 13, 2025. Attending: Commission Members Sherman Allen Jr., Janice Bowen, Martin Davis, Grace Frizzell and Darald Moulton; 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 4:58 pm and welcomed all attendees.

Janice Bowen moved to approve the minutes of the April 10, 2025 meeting as written, with a second by Darald Moulton, and the minutes were approved as written. There were no changes to the agenda or public comments.

With the Commissioners' agreement, Brad Peters provided an update on the 2025 season. Fence posts were replaced along one side and part of the back of Hillside Cemetery, as well as on the right-hand side of Bly Cemetery. Steel posts were completed on the back side and at Crawford Hill Cemetery, where perimeter brush was also cut.

Equipment is generally holding up well, although the Hillside mower deck arbors are becoming loud and may need replacement. When asked about the shed roof, Brad reported that the Hillside Cemetery shed will need to be re-shingled, requiring nine bundles including waste. The remaining three-quarters of a bundle from West Village can be used for the cap and starter rows, and Gervais will order the best match.

All equipment has been winterized. Mower blades are in good condition, though oil and filter changes will be needed in the spring. The weed trimmer has held up thus far.

Thanks were extended to the Allen family for the new engraved stone signage at West Village. Sherm Allen noted they were inspired by the Buck family's gift to Buck Cemetery.

Town Treasurer Teri Gray reported that the Stone Preservation Fund has a balance of \$592 and that the Cemetery Department budget is in good shape. Approximately \$5,700 remains available in the 2025 budget for purchases that may be needed this year, such as shingles.

Teri Gray noted that Brad Peters generously conducts veterans' burials at no cost to families and asked whether the board would consider compensating him for his time when he performs these services. Janice Bowen moved to pay Brad for his time spent on veterans' burials, seconded by

Grace Frizzell, and the motion passed unanimously. The Commission expressed its appreciation to Brad Peters.

Cemetery lot prices were reviewed, and Martin Davis recommended keeping the prices the same. No action was taken, so current prices will remain in effect.

Brad Peters asked whether the board had ever considered offering single lots, noting that there are some areas at Hillside Cemetery where a 4-foot space could serve as a single lot. Sherm Allen recalled a situation several years ago in which a benefits agency would only pay for one lot. In that case, the Commission divided a half-lot and charged half the fee, with the understanding that the remaining portion would be used in a similar manner. Sherm confirmed that four feet is just enough room for a headstone.

Teri Gray presented a report on 2025 revenue and expenditures to date. Commission members then reviewed 2026 budget needs and agreed to propose the following amounts for the town budget:

- Wages: Laborers feel the current \$17 hourly rate is fair, so members agreed to revisit wages in the fall. The 2026 budget amount for wages will remain at \$11,500.
- Flags: With three additional veteran graves, Brad Peters reported that the current number of flags needed is 203. This year's order totaled approximately 212 flags, which will be sufficient again. The 2026 budget amount for flags will remain at \$175.
- Equipment: Brad Peters noted that the weed trimmer he has been concerned about has a high number of hours, so it is prudent to keep replacement funds in the budget. This line item will remain at \$500. Members also discussed purchasing mower deck parts before the end of 2025.
- Repairs & Supplies: The 2026 budget amount will remain at \$2,000.
- Gasoline: The line item will remain at \$1,000.
- Fencing & Repairs: This line item will remain at \$100.

Also under Budget, Janice Bowen noted that interest income was higher in 2025. Teri Gray reported that the town was able to get more favorable rates on Perpetual Care Fund CDs for a shorter time.

Sherm Allen asked how many stones could be cleaned using the Stone Preservation Fund, which currently has a balance of \$592. Brad Peters said he personally cleans a few stones but does not have the time to take on a larger cleaning project for the Commission. He also noted that a company could complete the work more efficiently than one person.

Sherm Allen raised the issue of cemetery lots near the West Village tool shed. Brad Peters noted that lots in that area are penciled in on the map and that there appears to be space to add two additional rows where people currently park; there is another area available for parking. Sherm Allen said there is greater potential for sellable lots on that side compared to the other side,

although no inquiries have been made so far. He added that if there is interest, he would bring the matter to the board and the Commissioners could schedule a site visit.

Brad Peters reported that he has been speaking with property owner Alan Eliason, who is cutting posts and boards for a square cedar fence at Morrill Cemetery. Mr. Eliason also has loggers available to remove a nearby tree, pending Commission approval, as the back side of the tree is rotted and likely to fall. Mr. Eliason has topsoil and will work with Brad Peters to level the area. Janice Bowen moved to approve removing the tree, seconded by Darald Moulton, and the motion was approved.

Sherman Allen recommended setting the 2026 Annual meeting for Thursday, April 9th at 5:00pm, and all members agreed. The Clerk's Office will work with members on the agenda in March.

Seeing no other new or old business to discuss, Janice Bowen made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Darald Moulton, and the meeting adjourned at 5:44pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sherman Allen, Jr., Chairperson

Approved this 9th day of April 2026:
