

Charlotte Cemetery Commission Meeting
July 14, 2016 11:30am – 1:00pm
Town Hall

APPROVED 8-4-16

MINUTES

Participants: Cemetery Commissioners Cheryl Walker, Linda Hamilton and Viki Zulkoski; former Commissioner Stephen Brooks; Town Clerk Mary Mead (for relevant portions of the meeting).

Minutes of the June 21, 2016 meeting were approved.

Cemetery mowing

Following up on our June 21 meeting with Dale and Vanessa Knowles of Mow! Mow! Mow!, Cheryl and Viki have been present during subsequent mowing of West Burying Ground. Viki also met with Dale on site July 12 to review conditions and assess the modified mowing techniques. Raising the mower blade and staying several inches away from stones with the mower and weed whacker seem to be providing some protection of stones. To avoid losing track of flat stones in grass intentionally left longer, Viki recommended to Dale that the space between adjacent flat stones be weed whacked each time to give a visual cue that flat stones are nearby.

Linda will write a formal follow-up letter to Dale and Vanessa on behalf of the Commission to thank them for the modifications made, and indicate that we are satisfied with the results.

We are satisfied that Dale and Vanessa are modifying their usual mowing techniques as best they can with the equipment they have, but they are not able to achieve the level of grounds maintenance (grass cutting) needed. It is necessary to supplement the Town contract with them with the hiring of casual labor to cut closer to stones with appropriate small equipment. Even though it is an additional expense, this trimming is needed in order to achieve a tidy overall appearance and prevent the establishment of deep-rooted plants next to stones. Stephen has been asked to organize appropriate casual labor for this.

Budget review

After review of last year's expenses and expenses so far this season, it is anticipated that basic grounds maintenance expense will be at least \$4,000 (for mowing, weed whacking, grass blowing, woody debris pick-up). The FY2017 anticipated tree work has been completed for an additional \$780. Low spots are being filled with material from Champlain Valley Compost.

Stone straightening and repair in West Burying Ground will be slowly continued as weather and available personnel permit, working west to east, with a probable expense of \$2,000. Stephen has a small supply of basic materials on hand for this work, and if specialized materials are needed, he will alert the Commission and request an email approval to purchase.

Signatures required for purchasing

Mary confirmed that in order to use the Town's charge account at Aubuchon Hardware, the signatures of all three Commissioners need to be added to the Town's authorization. This was done immediately following the meeting. Now Stephen (acting as the Commission's Purchasing Agent), can charge and pick up supplies at Aubuchon's on our behalf.

It was also confirmed that Stephen can be reimbursed for gas and oil for his personal vehicle or equipment used in carrying out his designated volunteer work.

Signatures and information required for making payments

When unclear or incomplete invoices are received by Mary either directly or through Stephen, she will contact one of the Commissioners. When documentation of the expense is complete, she will prepare a warrant for payment and this will need to be signed by two Commissioners. Warrants are usually available for signature at Town Hall on Mondays, and Commissioners will be notified by email if there are relevant ones to sign. In order to avoid unnecessary delays, Cheryl prepared basic templates which Stephen is requested to use with contractors and laborers which specify the kind of information the Town Clerk needs in order to process payment.

Donation received

In late June the Cemetery Commission received a generous donation of \$4,000 from the Patrick Foundation. This has been deposited in the Special Funds account, for use as needed. A letter conveying our sincere thanks will be prepared by Viki for all Commissioners to sign. This donation is very much appreciated, especially in light of the long list of deferred maintenance and repair noted in the Commission's recent tour of cemeteries. Thank you, Patrick Foundation!

Mapping of graves in West Burying Ground

Given the age and inadequacy of existing records and maps, the Commission believes a map is needed which indicates at least the approximate location of current graves. With this tool we can determine if and where additional burials are possible.

Preliminary research has been done on ground-penetrating radar and other mapping techniques, but discussion of how to approach such a project was deferred to a future meeting.

Hiring of Stephen Brooks as Operations Assistant to Cemetery Commission

In consideration of the nature and amount of work Stephen is currently providing, the Commission feels it is appropriate to compensate him financially. While serving as a Commissioner he arranged for and oversaw cemetery field work, and has made himself available to continue under the authority of the current Commission (appointed in March 2016). This is very much appreciated, since the current Commissioners are not available to take on day-to-day work coordination. However, both Stephen and the Commissioners acknowledge that it is unfair to ask someone to carry this significant responsibility on a volunteer basis.

Therefore, the attached scope or work for 2016 was circulated prior to the meeting and finalized July 14 as a contract with Stephen for \$1,600. It was reviewed by Mary and accepted as a contract, with half of the compensation to be paid at this time, --pending confirmation by Pam Fecteau (or other authority at Vermont League of Cities and Towns) as qualifying as a contract rather than standard employment subject to payment of workman's compensation.

Next meeting

Thursday August 4, 2016, 10:00-12:00 at Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda S. Hamilton, Secretary

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**Cemetery Commission**  
Town of Charlotte, Vermont 05445  
*Viki Zulkoski, Cheryl Walker, Linda Hamilton*

**Operations Assistant to the Cemetery Commission**

**Scope of Work**

During 2016 assist the Cemetery Commission with routine cemetery maintenance and repair in the following ways:

- Monitor conditions regularly in West and East Burying Grounds and various private burying grounds in Town. Assess priority needs and report these to Cemetery Commission.
- Based on prior experience, arrange for and oversee the work of private contractors and casual labor to carry out routine maintenance tasks, as well as the straightening and repair of cemetery stones, within guidelines and budget authorized by the Commission. Be responsible for providing Town Clerk with all required paperwork related to hiring and payment.
- Participate in regular monthly Commission meetings and advise on issues as they arise.

**Compensation**

\$1,600 in two payments of \$800, for variable hours per week plus use of personal vehicle when needed to carry out these duties.

Accepted July 14, 2016

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Stephen C. Brooks

Linda S. Hamilton