



Cemetery Commission Meeting Agenda

JUNE 15, 2023, 4:30 PM

MEETING CONDUCTED VIA ZOOM AND
IN PERSON AT LAKEVIEW CEMETERY, 455 NORTH AVE

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- I. Approval of Agenda
- II. Approval of Minutes from 4/20/2023 Meeting
- III. Public Forum
- IV. Fee Assessment – Veteran/Military rates
- V. Animal Interments – rates and policies
- VI. Staff/Director Items
- VII. Commissioner Items
- VIII. Adjournment



Cemetery Commission Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: Thursday, April 20, 2023, 4:30 pm

Commissioners Present: Rita Church, Jennifer Diaz, Alexandra Millar, Nancy Kirby, Mary Wesley (not present at start of meeting)

Staff Present: Cindi Wight – BPRW Director, Holli Bushnell – Cemetery Staff, Steve Bachand – Cemetery and Grounds Manager

Meeting was called to order at 4:52pm by Jennifer Diaz

I. Approval of the Agenda

Diaz moved to adopt the agenda, Nancy Kirby seconded, and all were in favor.

II. Approval of Minutes from 4/20/2023

Diaz moved to approve the minutes, Rita Church seconded, all were in favor.

III. Public Forum

Public forum was opened at 4:54. As no members of the public were present or wished to speak it was also closed at 4:54pm

IV. Fee Assessment – Veteran/Military Rates

Holli Bushnell explained that a family approached her and asked for a discount for their loved one who was both a veteran and a former POW. As it is the commission that sets the rates for burial she was unable to provide them with a discount, however the family requested that the commission review the rates at the next meeting.

Church asked for clarification as to who would be receiving this discount. Bushnell clarified that this would be for all military veterans. Church commented that veterans are offered provided with both a free lot and burial at the military cemetery in Randolph. Nancy Kirby added that her father was a in the military and was provided a free marker, however he was buried at Mount Calvary Cemetery and consequently did not receive a free burial. Bushnell explained that the military offers multiple options for deceased veterans, but they do not provide burial fees for all vets.

Alexandra Millar commented that if the commission is going to consider offering a discount to one group there should be a larger discussion about rates for other groups as well to ensure our polices are equitable. Millar continued that, while she feels disinclined to open the conversation up at this point in time the topic of offering a discount to special groups is something she'd discuss in the future given more time to consider the topic.

Diaz added that she felt inclined to say yes to offering a military discount, however she also agrees that the concept needs to be discussed in greater detail and that other groups should be considered for a discount as well. Diaz did not feel comfortable setting rates without having commensurate rates from other cemeteries to work from. That said, she felt that providing a burial discount is the least of what we could do for heroes who have put their lives on the line to serve our country, even if it's only 10%. Mary Wesley also felt inclined to say yes to a discount, but also wanted to spend more time researching rates and policies. Wesley's concern was that we can uphold the new policy in the future.



Cindi Wight agreed that further discussion was needed. Kirby added that if veterans are offered a discount their spouse's might also request one. She cautioned that the policy be thanks for putting forward, we'll discuss and consider, but we need more time to work through it. Millar asked if the family who made the request would be willing to attend the next meeting and Bushnell commented that they were supposed to attend this meeting. Diaz requested it be added to the agenda for the next meeting and that Bushnell do some research into military discounts at public and private cemeteries in Chittenden county.

V. Animal Interments – Rates and Policies

Bushnell explained that she was approached by a lot owner regarding the burial of his beloved animals in his lot. As a life-long bachelor, his animals were his children and he wants them, to be interred before he passes so he knows they'll be with him. In the past the cemetery has allowed animal interments at the time of human remain/cremain burial, but we do not have a policy regarding interment for animal cremains alone. After discussing with working foreman Paul Morris and Cemetery and Grounds Manager Steve Bachand, Bushnell informed the lot owner that the cemetery could bury the animal remains that the standard cremation rate of \$550. The lot owner requested that the commission take up the item to determine a rate for animal/pet cremain burial.

Diaz's initial reaction was that we should not allow individuals to purchase lots specifically for pet burial. That said, burial in an existing lot along with their owners was acceptable to her.

Millar agreed that lots should not be purchased specifically for pet burial as there are animal cemeteries in the area, however burial in an existing lot would be another income opportunity for the cemetery and she doesn't see why there couldn't be a burial rate for pets.

Steve Bachand commented that the burial would be less work for staff to do for a pet burial compared to a human burial. Wight added that, even though it's less work, it's not fair to discuss discount. Millar continued that if we don't set a rate or create a policy we are missing out on the opportunity to generate more income. Wight then added that pet burials could be done at the standard burial rate. Diaz stated her concerns that allowing pet burials might be setting a bad precedent. Lakeview is not a pet cemetery. Church added that there is a pet cemetery in South Burlington.

Kirby commented that if lot owners feel their pets are family then the cemetery should charge for interment as though those animals are people. Diaz agreed, adding that insurance companies are starting to cover animals on their policies and, she can see where this lot owner is coming from. That said, she doesn't think that a human cemetery should give the lot owner a discount for the interment. Wesley also agreed that the lot owner should pay the full burial rate if the labor is similar to a regular cremation burial.

Church joked that the cemetery does have a no dogs policy and Wight added that the policy only applies to live animals. Kirby felt that if any discount is going to be offered it should be considered for humans first (such as veterans). Bachand agreed that a veteran discount should be established before any discounted pet rate should be considered.

Bushnell summarize that the lots for sale are for humans and cannot purchased for pet burial alone. However, if a lot owner wants to inter their pets in their lots they are welcome to pay the regular interment rate. Millar concluded by added that Bushnell should reinforce the idea that lot owners can hold on to animal cremations until they pass, then the animals can be interred with them for one rate.

VI. Staff/Director items

Bachand shared that staff successfully cleaned out the homeless encampment on the Cambrian Rise property adjoining Lakeview. There were numerous hazardous materials on site that staff couldn't



touch and need to be care. The removal did require taking down the fence and a few small trees situated between the two properties.

Bushnell shared that a group of BHS students visited both Lakeview and Elmwood, touring both spaces and doing some light stone cleaning at Lakeview

Bachand shared that employees from Keurig/Dr Pepper will be having a volunteer work day at Lakeview on 7/5.

Bushnell reminded the commission that the VOCA Work Day at Elmwood will be July 15 from 8am to noon.

VII. Commissioner Items

Kirby noted that there was a large working at Greenmount earlier in the day. She also added that the Old East Enders held a gathering a few weekends ago, and several people commented on how good Greenmount has looked. Church added that Lakeview looked beautiful for Memorial Day Weekend. Bachand will let the guys know their work is appreciated. Wight shared that the cemetery was low on staff for that weekend, but Bachand put the word out, and got other parks staffers to step up, work over time, and get the cemeteries in great shape for Memorial Day. Bachand added that the cemetery had 4 full-time staffers come over to help with mowing after working a full day. They ended up mowing until 6 or 7 at night. He continued that the cemetery is now back to full staffing levels with 4 high school kids starting next week and 3 full time seasonal employees. We're in good shape soon. Millar sent pictures from the gardening workday at pollinator garden.

The commission and staff spent the remainder of the meeting celebrating Rita Church and her retirement from decades of service on the Cemetery Commission.

VIII. Adjournment

Diaz moved to adjourn the meeting, Kirby seconded, all were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 5:57pm. The next meeting will be held September 21, 2023 at 4:30pm at the Lakeview Cemetery office.