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**TOWN OF
BROOKLINE, NEW HAMPSHIRE
Cemetery Trustees**

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<http://www.brooklinenh.us>

***Brookline Cemetery Trustees Minutes
Friday, September 17, 2021***

Meeting held in person at Town Hall

Attending:

Brian Rater, chair
Ann Somers, secretary
Judy Cook, member
Mike Wenrich, sexton

Also attending:

Clarence Farwell
Marcia Farwell

The meeting opened at 2:06 pm.

Public input

Clarence and Marcia Farwell expressed dismay at having heard we were considering removal/replacement of the plastic picket fence at Lakeside Cemetery. They strongly prefer the aesthetics of the historic picket style. They noted that at one time Lakeside had been fenced with chain (drape as we are considering now, or link?), and that North Cemetery had previously had a stone wall along Route 13 where recently we replaced the plastic pickets with stones. Judy pointed out that we were trying to minimize maintenance for the long term, and that the plastic pickets become brittle and damage easily. She noted that draped chain can be dipped at reasonable cost with a substance that is said to last for 300 years. Brian suggested that we plan for a public hearing as we evaluate further the fencing needs for both Pine Grove and Lakeside. The Farwells left following the discussion.

Minutes

The minutes from August 19th and August 25th were unanimously approved as written.

Update from Sexton

Mike reported that he remains unexpectedly busy with sexton duties lately, easily a full day's work per week (more than past years had indicated), with additional cremation burials that had been postponed due to Covid, and several recent deaths. **Judy** volunteered to replace dripping spigots with a different style for a clean cutoff; she will start with the one at the tomb and the next one north of that, and Mike will evaluate.

Mike said that he would like to see a Facebook page in support of the cemeteries, to encourage awareness and broaden volunteer participation. **Judy** said she will to do that.

Cemetery cost trends

Brian noted that costs in general are rising. We discussed mowing costs, the addition of flat-marker trimming (estimated at a full day once or twice a year), and how fortunate we are in **Pedro** who is so dedicated to doing excellent work. **Judy** volunteered her husband Peter to do a spreadsheet, with graphs, of historical expenses. She noted that she has access each summer to workers at \$10/hour.

Budget for 2022

We discussed at length with help from Town Administrator **Tad Putney** the various categories of Cemetery funding in the Town Report. There are some anomalies to clear up, which **Brian** will pursue.

- Cemetery Funds – includes the General Fund from which expenditures are made
- Cemetery Trust Fund – derived from past plot sales; interest/dividends available for transfer to General Fund
- General Maintenance Fund – the original plan was to build this fund to cover expenses. Right-to-inter purchases should go here, but have not recently; Tad will sort it out.
- Cemetery Irrigation Trust Fund

There was discussion around whether the cemeteries should be fully self-funded or should routinely request operating expenses from the town. **Brian** spoke in favor of the former as a principle. **Ann** and **Judy** supported the latter as a visibility/responsibility issue. Brian noted that last year we gained \$11K from interest/dividends, the year before \$24K.

Budget breakdown:

1. Mowing/trimming/landscaping -- \$17,000
2. Tree maintenance/replacement -- \$12,000 to remove the aged and deteriorating Pine Grove silver maples; replacement to be discussed for a future budget
3. Monument maintenance -- \$500 for materials, work done by volunteers
4. Gravel/grading -- \$1,000
5. Scholarship (a line in the Town Report; Brian will research) -- \$1,000

Of the total of \$31,500, we determined to spend \$11,500 of our own funds and ask the Town for \$20,000. **Judy** moved, **Ann** seconded, voted unanimously in favor.

North Cemetery Stone Wall

We selected October 16 as a work day. **Mike** will do the advance work with stones and will remove any remainders after the wall is complete. **Ann** will contact previous volunteers who may be available to help.

Sign for North Cemetery

Judy reported that this will become a project for next year.

Removal of flags

Ann Webb has notified us that the flag holders, purchased thanks to donations by individuals from Brookline and Hollis as well as one Brookline business, will be available in a month or so. Judy will provide her list of veterans to Ann and Peter Webb who will do but bulk of the work, and to Greg D'Arbonne of the American Legion who will assist them. Currently there are 208 veterans identified on the list. We determined that the removal/replacement of flags properly belongs to others, not to the Trustees. **Ann Somers** has a small supply of flags for interim replacement as needed, and anticipates fewer replacements with the holders in place and flags held away from the ground.

Tree trimming at Pine Grove

Mike reported that the "woodpecker tree" has been taken down. He will remove the trunk, saving the town that expense.

Forms and Packet

Mike will work further on this in the winter.

Fence needs at Pine Grove and Lakeside

Postponed in favor of more urgent matters.

Update on Pine Grove Documentation

Judy reported that the Word documentation will likely be ready to give to Brian in December for translation into an Excel product with substantially enhanced flexibility.

Renumbering certain plots at Pine Grove

Mike, Judy and Ann will meet very soon for one or more work sessions to lay out the rows at Pine Grove to the south of Potanipo Way and west of Swallow Tucker Avenue. A few of the recently sold lots may need to be re-numbered, depending on the facts on (and in) the ground.

Repair and cleaning of monuments

Judy reported that she has been cleaning some of the illegible monuments and markers. She has decided to avoid marble, which is particularly fragile, in future efforts. She and husband Peter have raised some sunken flat markers, re-settling with pea stone. Judy has removed the broken member of the Rockwood Five (along Swallow Tucker, toward south and east) and will also take off site a split monument, both of them for repair with expert help. She is making signs to leave in their places, educating anyone interested about what is going on. Upon return of the Rockwood monument, Dave Tiller of Andres will align the remaining monuments, which are variously tilted [good luck with those maple roots!-ACS].

Cemetery in the Woods kiosk cleanup

Judy stated that time constraints have put this on hold.

Recovery of old plots with minimal burials for re-use

Judy noted that she will be going to an NH Old Graveyards conference this weekend.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:07 p.m. The next meeting will be Friday, October 1st at 11:00 a.m.

Minutes submitted by Ann C. Somers