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

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<http://www.brooklinenh.us>

***Brookline Cemetery Trustees Minutes
Friday, June 10, 2022***

Meeting held in person at the Brookline Public Works building and via Zoom

Attending:

Brian Rater, chair
Ann Somers, secretary, via Zoom
Judy Cook, member

Mike Wenrich, sexton

The meeting opened at 11:06 a.m. There was no public input.

Approve Minutes

The **minutes** from April 1st were approved unanimously as written. **Brian-Y, Judy-Y, Ann-Y**

10-year visioning for Brookline

The Selectboard has invited all town bodies to submit their thoughts on a ten-year vision for Brookline. **Brian** will email the SB to say we would like to be included on their list.

Budget review

Brian provided an overview of our 2022 budget/expenditures to date. All on track.

Report on Brendan Denehy's tour of Pine Grove

Brian reported that **Brendan Denehy's tour of Pine Grove was a success, with approximately 40 people attending.** He may repeat it in the fall. **Judy** was contacted by a couple of visitors interested in **helping with cleaning.**

Sexton report

Mike presented several invoices for approval:

- \$532.61 to American Flagging & Traffic control: \$325 for signs for cleaning up after pets at both Pine Grove and Lakeside (slightly over budget), and \$207.61 for “delineator” for marking out new plots.
- \$141.51 to The Country Store for miscellaneous hardware for various cemetery needs.
- \$43.89 to Tyler Pickard to reimburse a payment to The County Store for spikes.
- \$45.98 to Tyler Pickard to reimburse a payment to Harbor Freight for tarps.

Ann moved/Judy seconded that we approve the above expenditures: Ann-Y, Judy-Y, Brian-Y.

Mike noted that there have been fewer burials recently than last year, but more people interested in preparing Right To Inter forms.

Ann asked about his time spent vs. expectations when he accepted the Sexton responsibilities, and what impact that might have on town budgeting. **Mike** said he can easily put in one to one and a half days per week, which is more than any of us had anticipated. His time goes to three main areas: maintenance, burials, and administration. He noted that preparing for each burial can take many hours of Sexton time, as the process is typically unfamiliar to the applicant, is emotional and tailored to each family, and requires significant planning and tact for both plot arrangements (including monument design) and process. He has been subject to after-hours angry texts. **Ann and Brian would like to see records for the last 20 or 30 years** (a town growth spurt began in the early 1990s) showing burials per year. Ideally the list would note full burial vs. cremains, and age at death. **Judy** suggested that we may be approaching a new wave of Korean-war-era deaths.

Mike noted that Dave Cody of Hudson Monument was impressed with Brookline’s organization around burials. **Mike** feels that he gives good value, and we agree. **Tyler recently completed his first sole-responsibility burial, resulting in glowing thank-you notes sent from the family and the church involved.** **Mike** said that townspeople have made observations about how nice Pine Grove is looking.

Mike reported he had received one no-bid and one very expensive bid for **Pine Grove tree removal** and stump grinding by companies using cranes. **Daryl Pelletier proposed doing removal by climbing for \$9,350, to include chipping brush and hauling logs away.** **Mike** recommended we accept this proposal and manage the stump grinding with BPW equipment and personnel. **Judy moved/Ann seconded that we accept Mike’s suggestion for Pelletier tree removal and BPW stump grinding, with a total NTE price of \$12,000.** All in favor: **Brian-Y, Judy-Y, Ann-Y**

Flag holders update

Judy reported that the flag holder project has been completed. Any remaining holders will go to Mike in case of later discoveries. Future veteran burials will be offered the opportunity to contact the Legion to arrange for holders and flags.

Monument restoration and cleaning projects

Judy reported that she will soon have summer help available for cleaning and re-settling monuments. Dave Tiller and Mark Donahue of Andres Institute will continue repair and re-setting work on the two Rockwood plots begun last year. **Mike** noted that Hudson Monument was highly impressed with the quality of work being done. **Ann** continues to uncover buried markers. We will need to determine how best to manage them, particularly in the oldest section, among the blueberries, where a broken monument and some apparent footstones were discovered. Likely a Judy project.

Pavers at entrance to wrong path at Pine Grove

This agenda item is in error – the recent paving of South Main Street left an “apron” for Potanipo Lane which does not match the planned straightening of the lane, but the sidewalk project scheduled for this summer will include the desired change.

Pine Grove documentation

Judy reported that the documentation continues, along with Ann and Mike’s contributions, and she is nearly finished and turning to the question of optimal storage. Along with the convenience of local electronic storage and the anticipated durability of records listed on FindAGrave.com, her backup plan is to have a complete paper file in storage with the Sexton, organized by cemeteries and their plots.

Recovering old/unused plots and lots

Judy reiterated that there are NO deeds to land involved in Brookline’s cemeteries, and thus the land ownership remains with the town. We need to formalize a process for making available for active use those plots which clearly will not be used by the families in whose names they may be listed. **Ann** noted that she would like to see some of the recovered plots used for trees and benches, and all concurred.

Brian suggested we discuss developing a use-recovery policy at our next meeting.

Cemetery in the Woods kiosk

Judy anticipates that refreshing this will take about a day’s worth of work with the help of summer students, and will be accomplished this summer.

North Cemetery stone wall completion

Mike will consult with Peter Webb about this.

North Cemetery gate update

Judy reported that John Weidman has sufficient materials and is working on the gate as his schedule allows; she and husband Peter will make a donation toward it.

Cemetery signs (all four)

Mike has called for quotes; **Judy** is collecting data for age of each cemetery.

Cemetery bench offer

Russell and Sue Haight have offered to donate a bench in memory of their parents, Alan and Dorothy Haight and Frederick and Eleanor Los Kamp. Judy suggests that stone benches would be more durable than the park bench style. The Women's Club has found a different purpose for their current giving, but with a specific idea in the future we may find common purpose.

Rules/guidelines for removal of decorations

Currently we remove on an *ad hoc* basis those decorations which have clearly expired. We all agreed, including Sexton Mike, that in order to simplify overall cemetery maintenance, we want to remove shrubs and possibly perennials that clearly are not receiving the necessary maintenance from families.

We will identify removals on our June walkaround.

Creation of a cemetery support organization

Judy will collect over the summer a list of interested persons who may form a nucleus for a potential Friends of Brookline Cemeteries.

Fencing at PG, Lakeside

We agreed to postpone any action on Lakeside fencing, but move forward on the un-fenced portion of Pine Grove. **Judy/Ann** and all will explore/evaluate examples of post and chain. **Mike** pointed out how helpful post and removable chain would have been in providing access for a recent burial along South Main Street. **Brian** suggested we should present the idea to the public in some forum, and see what input is offered; **Ann** strongly concurred.

Reconsidering layouts for SW corner

We talked about the 20x20 plots versus other potential grave layouts for the southwest corner of Pine Grove. The first two or three rows directly south of Potanipo Lane have been established as 20x20s, but those in a general way create some problems with current burial preferences/practices. The idea was raised of extending the Cross Road fencing row of parallel plots toward South Main Street, upon which there was general agreement. There may or may not be thoughts of a memory garden and columbaria near the Cross Road/ South Main intersection. We will evaluate during our planned walkaround.

June Walkaround at Pine Grove

Our annual walkaround of the cemeteries will be the focus for our next meeting. Judy will bring a map of Pine Grove, and we will mark locations for irrigation points (current and proposed), tree/bench desirable locations, shrubs/other plantings to remove, and potential additional layouts for the SW corner.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:05 p.m. Our next meeting will be cemetery walkarounds beginning Friday, June 24, 2022 at 10:00 a.m., at the field on the southwest corner of Pine Grove Cemetery, continuing through the four cemeteries as weather and energy permit.

The following regular meeting is scheduled for July 22, 2022 at 3:00 at the Public Works building.

Minutes submitted by Ann C. Somers