

**Minutes of Meeting
Nelson Cemetery Board
Tuesday, September 28, 2021, 4:00 PM**

Members Present: Elaine Giacomo, Linda Cates, Al Stoops, Laurie Smith, Harry Flanagan

Elaine called the meeting to order at 4:05 PM in the Munsonville Cemetery.

Review/Approve Minutes of the Last Meeting:

Minutes of the August unofficial meeting were reviewed and approved as presented. The minutes were drafted by Linda with additions and corrections by Elaine.

Posting of Notice of Meeting:

Laurie, who is now Town Treasurer and is therefore often at the Town offices, offered to arrange with Edie for the posting of the notices of our meetings. We all agreed that she should do this. Thank you, Laurie. Al suggested that notice of any outdoor meetings should include a back-up location in case of weather. We all agreed. Elaine said that our default location for meetings is Town Hall.

Update on Tree Trimming:

Al reported that he has been playing phone tag with Noah Washburn regarding tree trimming in the Old Cemetery #1. Al will follow up.

Contact with Consultant, Tom Daly:

Elaine reported that she had been in touch with Tom Daly via email. She requested a list of cemeteries that he designed. He provided two names in New Hampshire. One was Groton. Elaine emailed the cemetery board asking if they were happy with his services. She has not received a response. The second was Nashua. Elaine contacted them and they responded that Mr. Daly designed a berm for them for an addition to the Edgewood Cemetery on Amherst Street.

Elaine said that Mr. Daly did not respond to her question regarding test pits.

Elaine is attending the New Hampshire Cemetery Association annual meeting in Manchester on October 6th and hopes to see Mr. Daly there. She also hopes that someone from the Groton Cemetery Board will be there.

Elaine received a booklet from the New England Cemetery Association with vendor contacts listed in the back. One of those is Meridian Land Services that does layouts for cemeteries. Elaine will contact them. Harry said that it's always good to get a second opinion.

Contact with Nearby Cemetery Boards or Town Clerks:

Harry reported that he has still not heard back from any of the Town Clerks he contacted regarding pricing of services at local cemeteries. Lauri suggested that he contact the Cemetery Boards directly. He could look on-line for contact information. Elaine will also try to get contact information while she is at the NH Cemetery Association meeting.

Discussion of Reclaiming Abandoned Cemetery Plots:

According to New Hampshire law 289:18, a cemetery plot is considered abandoned after 50 years if there has been no use of or improvement to the plot. Al had pointed out via email a posting in the Keene Sentinel this week regarding potential abandoned plots in the Surry Cemetery. Linda had clipped the article and passed it around. Harry will drive to Surry and see what he can find out.

Our problem with abandoned plots is the absence of records for the Old Cemetery #1. Elaine said that Poul Schillemat did an Eagle Scout Project on the Old Cemetery. It is on a floppy drive, but only contains the names that he found on the headstones. Elaine will try to retrieve the contents.

Linda suggested that we would need to walk around Old Cemetery #1 to identify what areas are seemingly unused.

There are even some short comings in the records for Cemetery #2. Elaine said that Ann Johnson's family owns plots 177 and 179 and wanted to purchase plot 181. Our records showed that it belonged to someone else, but Ann Johnson contacted them and learned that the lot had been sold back to the Town.

Status of Munsonville Cemetery:

Elaine reported that the Warrant Article Approved at Town meeting (around 2003 to 2005) accepting the Munsonville Cemetery was overturned by the State because no dollar value was attached to the article. Edie found the original deed, originally dated 1895. The deed does not reflect Town ownership. Edie is trying to get a cleaner copy of the deed.

Status of New Cemetery #3:

Henry Fuller gave the land for the new cemetery as a gift to the Town to be used as a cemetery. Elaine reported that that use is noted on the deed. However, the gift has to be accepted by both the Select Board and the Town. It has not been accepted at Town Meeting.

Elaine read a letter that she prepared to send to Betsy Street regarding the new cemetery abutting Betsy's land that is currently for sale. We all approved of the language in the letter. Under New Hampshire law there are certain regulations regarding properties abutting cemeteries and we wanted Betsy to be aware of them.

Harry said that the line between the cemetery land and Betsy's land should be maintained. Currently there is not fence or clear division of property.

Mausoleum Update:

Linda reported that the name on the Mausoleum is Melville and there are no Melville direct descendants. Elaine said that she thinks the Osgoods are somehow involved. Linda will look into this further. Laurie suggested that we could run an ad looking for descendants.

We are not sure that the Mausoleum is the risk that Consultant, Tom Daly, thought it was. Elaine will test the top with a stake to see if it is a granite top as we suspect it is.

Work Day in the Old Cemetery #1:

We will meet at 10:00 Am on Monday, October 4th to work in the Old Cemetery. Al will bring a chain saw. The rest of us will bring clippers and loppers, a pole saw, etc. Elaine will ask Mike Tarr if he can haul away the clippings.

Cemetery Trust Fund Balances:

Elaine said that Tom Newcomb reported the following balances:
\$28,374.57 Munsonville Cemetery General Fund
\$22,210.25 Munsonville Cemetery Perpetual Care
\$19,229.41 Nelson Cemetery Perpetual Care

We had some questions regarding use of the Perpetual Care funds.

Inspection of Munsonville Cemetery:

We walked around the Munsonville Cemetery taking note of the additional space available in the heavily wooded area behind the cemetery. We inspected the erosion in the front area and discussed the need to deal with that. We also saw the need for clipping of brush in the cemetery and around the edges of the cemetery. We noted the headstones that Harry marked for repair. We are unable to expend any funds on the Munsonville Cemetery this year, but will do so after it has been accepted by the Town at the next Town Meeting.

Handbook for Cemetery Trustees:

Linda reviewed another page of the Cemetery Trustee Handbook. We discussed section 289:5 Cemetery Records. It says that we "... shall keep a record of every burial showing the date of the burial and name of the person buried, when these particulars can be obtained, and the lot, plot, or part of such plot, in which the burial was made." We have not been keeping a record of the particular part of a plot in which remains are buried. In future, we will denote each part of a plot as A, B, C and D and will note in which section of the plot remains are interred.

We wondered if there are more records for the Munsonville Cemetery than what we have. Harry asked if perhaps Tom Newcomb or Bert Wingerson would know. Harry will also ask John Halter, a trustee of the Munsonville Church.

Elaine is still trying to identify cemetery software that will meet our needs.

The next section of the Handbook, 289:6, specifies that the Trustees "... shall organize by electing one of their number chairperson and another bookkeeper, who shall keep the records and books of the trustees, and shall issue vouchers as necessary for funds to be expended. The chairperson and the bookkeeper may be the same member." We agreed that Elaine is Chair and that she is the bookkeeper for issuing vouchers. Linda is the bookkeeper for keeping the minutes.

Linda also reported that she spoke with the New Hampshire Municipal Association and that they do workshops for new Cemetery Trustees. The trainings are in June so we just missed them. They sent Linda the Power Point and recording of the last training session. Linda will review them and forward them to the other members of the Board.

Election of Chair:

We realized that we had not elected officers this year and immediately and unanimously elected Elaine as Chair.

Gary Robinson:

Gary resigned from the Select Board but we are hopeful that he will continue to attend our meetings as we plan the new Cemetery #3. Elaine invited him to this meeting but he did not attend. Laurie will follow up with Gary and urge him to continue to join us.

Bill Dunn:

Harry asked if Bill Dunn had found anything in his exploration of cemetery property with a metal detector. Laurie said that along the road outside the new Cemetery #3, he found a lighter with the inscription "1943" and a name.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting will be Tuesday, October 19th, at 4:00 PM at the Library picnic tables, weather permitting; if not, then in Town Hall. Elaine will be away. Linda will chair the meeting. Laurie will take minutes.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:47 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Cates