

**Minutes of Meeting  
Nelson Cemetery Board  
Tuesday, December 14, 2021, 3:00 PM**

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

Al Stoops – prearranged absence

Elaine called the meeting to order just after 3:00 PM in the lower level of the library.

Minutes of the November meeting were reviewed and approved as presented. The minutes were drafted by Linda with additions by Al. The approved minutes were signed by those present at last month's meeting.

**Update by Elaine on Sale of Cemetery Plots:**

Elaine reported that four plots were sold this last month. Two yet to be laid out cremation plots in Cemetery Two were sold to Steve and Linda Buffam, who live on Old Stoddard Road. Two of the last remaining burial plots in Cemetery Two were sold to Jan Perry. Anita and Harry Flanagan are planning to buy the Cemetery One plot being sold back to the town by Allison Smith. The buy-back price and the sale price is \$350. Al is coordinating with Allison on the buy-back.

**2022 Budget:**

Elaine passed around copies of the preliminary 2022 budget that she submitted to the Town. That budget totaled \$22,000. We chose to increase the line item "New Cemetery Planning & Design" from \$6,000 to \$7,000, and the line item "Tree Pruning" (now "Tree Maintenance") from \$5,000 to 7,000, for a total budget of \$25,000.

Laurie suggested that we plan to discuss the budget in November next year. All agreed.

**2022 Annual Report:**

We reviewed Elaine's draft of the 2021 Annual Report. We agreed to add some language regarding the status of the Munsonville Cemetery and also to include a welcome to Laurie to the Board. Elaine will circulate the redraft for final review. She will also check with Karen to see that no one is missed in the list of interments.

**Review of the New England Cemetery Association Conference - Elaine & Linda:**

Elaine and Linda reported on their attendance at the recent conference of the New England Cemetery Association. Both were surprised to discover that most attendees represented very large cemeteries or profit-making cemeteries and services: for example, Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx with 400 acres, or Mount Auburn Cemetery (Boston) at 170 acres with plots as expensive as \$50,000 and above. There were only a few attendees from small municipal cemeteries. Elaine and Linda reported, however, that much of the material covered was relevant to us.

Elaine talked about a presentation by a man from Green Mountain Cemetery in Montpelier, Vermont on "Practical Applications of Green Burial in Existing Cemeteries." He talked about the difficulties of and equipment needed to lower a shrouded body into a shallow grave. He talked about what kind of soil is used, manure and compost in the

bottom and sand and compost on the top, covered with hay. One concern is coyote digging. Elaine also reported that in a session on "Monument Preservation" they discussed using D2 and sandblasting with corn cob hulls to clean marble.

Elaine said she had learned of another cemetery designer who is highly recommended: Greever & Ward in Orchard Park, New York.

Linda reported that she got lots of good information from a session on "Cemetery Trees, Risk Tolerance, Responsibility," and will report on that when AI is present as he is our "tree guy."

Linda also said that one of the things that stuck with her is that someone said, "A funeral or memorial used to be about "the body," with the family themselves washing and preparing the body for an open casket presentation. Now the norm is cremation and the service or memorial is about "the person," not the body." The cremation rate in New Hampshire is 76.9 % of all burials. In Maine the rate is 78.2 %, while in Massachusetts it's only 49.9%.

#### **Handbook for Cemetery Trustees – Linda:**

Linda said we've pretty much completed the relevant portions of the Handbook.

#### **Update on Contacts with Other Towns – Harry:**

Harry reported that the Chair of the Surry Cemetery Board is Bruce Smith.

#### **Other Items:**

We talked about a suggestion from the New England Cemetery Association Board Conference that we have a certified arborist review our trees. We will discuss this at the next meeting when AI is present. Harry recommended Wilcox Tree for tree trimming. This will also be discussed with AI.

Elaine suggested that we have Edie print up copies of the new regulations that we approved last year. Linda will email the document to Edie.

#### **Next Meeting:**

Having no further business, Elaine adjourned the meeting.

Our next meeting will be Tuesday, January 18, 4:00 PM in the lower level of the library.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Cates