

East Montpelier Cemetery Commission

The East Montpelier Cemetery Commission met at the Town Office at 1:00 PM on January 3, 2019. The following members were present: Tim Lamson, Chair, Elliott Morse, Gary Hudson, Jonathan Boucher, and Emily Goyette, Clerk.

Carl Etnier, Selectboard member joined the meeting at 1:30. Bruce Johnson, Town Administrator, and Don Welch, Town Treasurer, were also in attendance.

OLD BUSINESS

Agenda Item A: We neglected to approve the minutes of the September 6, 2018 meeting. No members of the public were in attendance nor were any comments received by commission members and reported at the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Agenda Item B: It was agreed to request a level funded budget for the coming year as follows:

Payroll	\$11,000
Fence Painting & Repair	2,000
Tombstone Cleaning & Repair	1,500
Cemetery Association Fees	100
Parts, Supplies & Maintenance	1,500
Contingency/Hogweed Remediation	500
Flags & Markers	150
Tree Cutting	<u>500</u>
Total	\$17,250

There was discussion about the category of Tombstone Cleaning & Repair. Jon advised that this is normally the responsibility of the plot owner, and in fact, our Information Sheet revised 11/13/2017 states, "The Cemetery commission assumes general care of the cemetery; however, this shall in no case mean the maintenance, repair, or replacement of any memorial." We do however have many older plots for citizens with no living relatives. Jon noted that tilting stones are a safety hazard and in those cases the cemetery commission will provide remediation.

Elliott moved and Gary seconded a motion to approve this 2019-2020 budget and it passed unanimously. It was also agreed to align the cemetery commission's budget categories with those the Town uses to track the commission's expenditures. Emily Goyette and Don Welch will work on that.

Bruce reported on the Selectboard's decision with respect to the private Poplar Hill cemetery in North Montpelier that contains the remains of some North Montpelier residents. Their association is in the process of dissolving because they are out of funds. Our Selectboard declined to request funds at Town Meeting as the cemetery is actually in Calais.

Goals for the 2019 season include:

- Mowing and landscaping as usual
- Maintaining all equipment (no new equipment is needed)
- Fixing posts: some need painting or staining, and some need straightening using crushed stone from the Town (Doty, Quaker, Cutler, Village, and Tinkham)
- Cutting brush in the Village cemetery
- Replacing flags before Memorial Day
- Moving corner markers in Cate
- Installing war veteran markers in Gould
- Burning Doty brush
- Removing dead tree in Doty
- Dealing with woodchucks in Tinkham and Quaker
- Creating Excel sheets with info re plot locations

Emily will draft the commission's report for the 2018 Town Report and circulate it to commission members for edits and approval. Tim will put together a narrative re the Gould cemetery investigation and resolution to incorporate in the Town Report or to publish in The Signpost.

Agenda Item C: The discussion from our last meeting continued regarding changing from a commission to a committee. Bruce noted that a commission has independent authority whereas a committee reports to the Selectboard. At issue is the fact that Elliott is an employee of the Town when performing cemetery maintenance, but when he serves as Sexton opening graves with his own tractor and receives payment from the family of the deceased (the customary practice), he is in essence an independent contractor. Per Bruce, this presents a conflict of interest, and there is also an insurance issue with Elliott using his own equipment. The town does not own equipment that could do this job. Should grave opening be put out to bid? Jon suggested that we create job descriptions for the employees who provide this work, naming a flat fee to be paid for grave opening. Elliott will find out whether he can get insurance for this use of his tractor. Specific details will be ironed out at future meetings. Jon moved and Gary seconded a motion to change from a commission to a committee. This change will be voted on at Town Meeting in March.

Agenda Item D: No other business discussed.

Agenda Item E: At 2:55 pm, Tim moved and Jon seconded a motion to adjourn. All agreed. The next meeting will be at the call of the Chair.

Respectfully submitted,

Emily Goyette, Clerk