

Princeton Cemetery Commission Meeting – Monday June 1, 2020
WebEx Remote-Meeting
Minutes

Present: Chair Charlie Steele, Lou Trostel, Paul Constantino, Lynne Grettum, Greg Miranda and Cemetery Superintendent Bill Bergstrom

Absent: None

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Steele at 2:32 P.M.

This meeting was held remotely using WebEx as recommended by the town during the current health advisory prohibition on in-person meetings.

Review of Previous Meeting Minutes

The Minutes from the past 4 meetings - February 10, 2020, March 30, 2020, May 6, 2020, and May 14, 2020 - were brought up for review. There were no comments or changes. L. Grettum motioned to accept the minutes as written, seconded by P. Constantino. The motion passed. Vote: 5-0.

Discussion of Bid for Outsourced Cemetery Grounds Keeping and Mowing Contract

Members discussed the current status of the bidding process and the proposal regarding in-town maintenance. Chair Steele reported that there was still interest amid other relevant parties (e.g. Select Board, Highway Department) in bringing cemetery maintenance back as a town function, but that significant discussion would be required regarding the addition of a new town employee and the scope of the job.

There is not time at present to arrange for such a transfer of maintenance duties, and discussion moved on to the approval of a bidder for the maintenance contract which is due to begin on July 1, 2020. Two bids had been received in response to the latest Invitation for Bids, which ended April 27, 2020. There was a significant difference in cost between the two proposals, and the clear low-bidder was Einstein's Solutions, Inc. of Fitchburg, MA.

The IFB asked for bids on a three-year contract, but the Members were in favor of awarding a one-year contract while various parties continue to evaluate the potential for transferring the maintenance work to the Highway Department. A point was raised regarding the need for providing gravesite preparation for full-size burials; this service has previously been provided by New England Acreage since the town does not possess the required mini-excavator. Members thought that it would be best to add that requirement to the new contract.

A motion was made by P. Constantino to accept the bid from Einstein's Solutions for a period of one year, running from July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021, and adding a new contingency requiring them to also provide digging services for gravesite preparation. The motion was seconded by L. Grettum, and passed by a vote of 5-0.

Cemetery Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Bergstrom reported that there have been five burials since the cemeteries reopened – one in South Cemetery and four in Woodlawn Cemetery. Maintenance work is underway with the current contractor.

FY 2021 Budget Changes

No changes were proposed for the FY 2021 budget beyond the previously approved request for an increase in the annual limit for the Cemetery Revolving Fund, from \$4000 to \$8000.

Need for More Veterans' Flag Holders

It was noted that more flag holders were required for the Veterans' grave markers on Memorial Day. Some have been lost over the years and others are becoming damaged and difficult to use. C. Steele volunteered to look into it and provide information to Superintendent Bergstrom on where to obtain more.

Cemetery Inspections

The cemetery inspections by individual commissioners have only been partially completed. Several issues were noted. There appeared to be some problems with weeds and the condition of the grass at Woodlawn Cemetery. A couple of headstones have fallen over in North Cemetery, with possible breakage damage. The driveway is deteriorating in Woodlawn Cemetery.

Superintendent Bergstrom will need to check if fertilizer/treatments have been performed yet in Woodlawn. He will also contact the person who repaired memorial stones for us last year, regarding further repairs to the new damage.

It is believed that the driveway in Woodlawn was repaired 4 or 5 years ago, and those repairs may be nearing the end of their life expectancy. Members will continue their inspections prior to next meeting.

Veterans' Report from MS Access Database and Cemetery Management Software

A report on the locations of veteran's graves has been compiled in the past, and then lost. It is uncertain that it was ever complete. The locations will probably have to be recompiled, hopefully in conjunction with new cemetery management software.

L. Grettum had taken the initial lead on investigating cemetery management software packages. Progress has been stalled recently, in part due to the pandemic. Other members plan to help with the research, and consolidate our information in the future.

Items not anticipated by the Chair 48 hours before meeting

P. Constantino raised some old business regarding the damaged guardrail and trailer-truck adjacent to South Cemetery, which have lingered for years. Superintendent Bergstrom will contact Ben Metcalf at the Highway Department to inquire about repairs to the guardrail. Chair Steele will contact Town Administrator Patch to see if any recent progress has been made regarding the removal of the trailer-truck.

It was noted that the Clark family was interested in returning an unused lot to the town, possibly as a donation. L. Grettum mentioned that there is a form in the Town Clerk's office specifically for this purpose, which could be used for either a re-purchase by the town or a donation by the family.

Next Meeting – TBD

The next meeting will be scheduled when appropriate by Chair Steele.

L. Grettum motioned to adjourn, seconded by P. Constantino, passed unanimously.
Meeting adjourned at 3:12 P.M.

Submitted by Greg Miranda, Secretary
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