

Princeton Cemetery Commission Meeting – Monday August 3, 2020
Remote-Meeting
Minutes

Present: Lynne Grettum, Paul Constantino, Greg Miranda, Lou Trostel, Town Administrator Sherry Patch

Absent: None

The meeting was called to order by Chair Grettum at 7:12 P.M.

This meeting was held remotely using GoToMeeting.

Cemetery Superintendent Resignation

Cemetery Superintendent Bill Bergstrom submitted a resignation letter to Administrator Patch on July 23, 2020, stating his decision to resign as of August 14, 2020. A motion was made by P. Constantino to accept Bill's resignation, seconded by Lou Trostel. Motion passed by a vote of 4-0.

Superintendent Job Posting

The Cemetery Superintendent performs critical duties for the town relating to burial procedures, besides overseeing maintenance of the cemetery grounds. It is important to find a replacement as soon as possible. In discussion of the job posting, some members were unfamiliar with the job description to be posted. Chair Grettum arranged to obtain a copy from Administrator Patch which will be distributed to the members by email. Rather than wait for the next meeting to review the description, it was decided that members would review the job description and return individual comments, if any, to Chair Grettum by Thursday August 6, 2020. Lynne will return the updated job description to Sherry for posting. A motion outlining the above was made by Chair Grettum, seconded by P. Constantino, and passed by a vote of 4-0.

Interim Superintendent Discussion

Members discussed how to handle matters during the period without an acting superintendent. It was noted that it may be difficult to find a replacement hire, given the requirements for experience combined with the part-time nature of the position. The Cemetery Commission Chair and Members are referenced as emergency backup for the Superintendent in the Cemetery Rules and Regulations, and the Commission is currently in the midst of redefining and clarifying certain issues relating to the chain-of-command and communication procedures in emergency situations. However, the Commission is not intended to perform the day to day duties and operations of the Superintendent, which leaves the members in a difficult position of responsibility without any direct support.

The maintenance of the cemetery grounds is being performed by the current external contractor, Einstein's Solutions, on a relatively automatic basis. Some oversight will still be required.

The biggest current need regards assistance with burials. There are two separate issues involving burials – gravesite location/marketing and gravesite physical preparations. The superintendent has been responsible for determining the exact gravesite location and placing

the actual markers for excavation prior to any digging. None of the Commissioners feel capable of performing that procedure so outside assistance will be required. It was mentioned that Rick Mansfield from Miles Funeral has been involved with multiple burials in Princeton and has been very helpful in the past. L. Grettum is to communicate with Rick about assisting us in locating contacts with experience who could help in this regard.

There is a need for better backup relating to gravesite preparations whether we have a superintendent in place or not. This function is not a part of cemetery maintenance contracts. The previous maintenance contractor provided this as an extra service for the town. The current contractor will perform the work if their equipment is available, at a significantly increased cost. The equipment availability is a major issue for many contractors, especially if they have to leave it at the cemetery in between preparing and closing the grave. This is probably a cost factor also. A specific piece of equipment, a mini-excavator, is required for digging the grave; this appears to be the limiting factor. Other, and larger, equipment can be used to refill the grave afterwards.

Given the importance of timely preparation and closing of the gravesite during the burial process, having access to dependable operators and equipment is critical. The best probable solution would be to bring that function within town operations. The Commission remains in favor of bringing the entire maintenance operation back in-house as a town responsibility, as opposed to the current external contractor setup. That would probably be a more reliable and cost-effective solution, though cemetery maintenance does not amount to an FTE (full-time employee) position. Whether a new position can be created in the highway department that would also encompass the cemetery needs, remains to be seen.

In the meantime, there are a number of local operators who have the appropriate mini-excavators who will be contacted regarding their potential availability for grave preparation activities. Additional contacts will be explored with Rick Mansfield.

Items not anticipated by the Chair 48 hours before meeting

None.

Next Meeting – August 17, 2020

The next meeting was scheduled for Monday August 17, 2020 at 7:00 PM. The meeting is anticipated to be held in-person at the Council on Aging Meeting Room at Post Office Place, with remote accessibility through GoToMeeting.

L. Trostel motioned to adjourn, seconded by G. Miranda, passed unanimously.
Meeting adjourned at 8:00 P.M.

Submitted by Greg Miranda, Secretary
PCCminutes 8.14.2020