

Minutes
Princeton Cemetery Commission Meeting – Monday January 10, 2022
Town Hall Annex – Small Meeting Room and GoToMeeting

Present: Lynne Grettum, Paul Constantino, Greg Miranda, Andy Brown

Absent: Lou Trostel

Attending: Michael Cote

The meeting was called to order by Chair Grettum at 7:03 P.M.

Review of Meeting Minutes from November 29, 2021

The minutes from the 11/29/2021 meeting were reviewed and approved as written, by unanimous vote of 3-0.

Administrative Items

Amy Holwell Resignation

Amy submitted a letter of resignation on 12/23/2021, effective 1/1/2022, citing personal and professional commitments. Her resignation was accepted with regrets, vote 3-0.

Lyons Burial Lot

At the September meeting, the Committee approved a proposal from Superintendent Brown that would allow the Lyons family to return ownership of an unused grave lot back to the town in return for a no-charge cremation burial in an existing lot. However, no progress has occurred. The Committee would like to go on the record that town officials will not be pursuing the owner of the unused lot to complete the deal; any further action must start with the family.

Superintendent Report (see attached report for details)

Highlights

- Cemeteries are closed for the winter, including locking the main gate at Woodlawn.
- No lot sales.
- No burials; one full-body burial has been scheduled for the spring.

There were no other questions or comments.

Financial Update

FY22 Spending to Date

A brief document was distributed by Chair Grettum listing the FY22 expenditures to date (through 1/3/22) and balances remaining versus appropriated amounts for the Miscellaneous and Cemetery Revolving accounts.

Approximately half of the Miscellaneous funds have been spent, which seems appropriate for being halfway through the FY22 maintenance season.

The Revolving account contains a balance of \$11,789.99, although only \$6323.05 remains available in FY22 given the \$10,000 per year spending cap.

The remaining funds appear sufficient for the rest of the budget year.

FY23 Budget Request

The Cemetery Department FY23 budget request has been submitted as decided at the previous 11/29/21 meeting. (A copy of the official Budget Worksheet was distributed by Chair Grettum.) Town review of all departmental requests is ongoing. Rather than requiring presentations by the individual departments this year, the review committee will follow up with questions if necessary.

Annual Town Report

Chair Grettum presented a draft document for the Annual Town Report from the Cemetery Department. The Committee approved the draft without changes.

Cemetery Database Update

Members Grettum and Miranda are continuing to investigate CMS (cemetery management software) packages. Online demonstration were presented by CIMS on 12/7/21, and CemeteryFind on 12/16/21. Those demos were also attended by others assisting in the evaluation, including Sherry Horeanopoulos. Scheduling is currently underway to set up presentations by a couple more companies, hopefully before the end of the month.

There was a question from Michael Cote, asking whether it might be feasible to utilize a volunteer from town with software expertise who could design a web-based portal for our data. The Committee did not favor using personally designed versus professional software, and thought the valuable data should be treated like other essential town records.

Highway Department Update

Chair Grettum attended a meeting with Karen Cruise (Selectboard), Ben Metcalf (Highway Department Superintendent) and Sherry Patch (Town Administrator) for an initial discussion regarding the potential take-over of certain Cemetery Department operational functions by the Highway Department. These operations could include maintenance and repair work outside of regular mowing/clean-up, providing excavation services for burials, or even the mowing itself.

The Committee is looking to bring stability to our cemetery operations. The routine mowing and spring/fall clean-up is currently being handled well via contract with public companies; the benefit of transfer to the town would be primarily one of possible cost control. The greater difficulty lies with other tasks currently performed by a temporary seasonal employee. Every year there are problems finding and hiring such an employee, and if a student, they often do not stay until the end of the season. If an employee is not available, maintenance and repairs are neglected, and an alternative source of labor must be found for grave excavations.

Ben plans to consult with the Sterling DPW for more information about how they handle cemetery operations in their town.

The group (Lynne, Ben, Sherry and Advisory Committee member Rick McGowan) plans to meet again for continuing discussion on 1/25/22.

What's Next for 2022

Major areas of planning for 2022 include:

- Choosing and implementing a CMS program for cemetery data management.
- Repair/improvement projects for town cemeteries during 2022 season.
- Developing a Long-Term Plan for the Cemetery Department.

Chair Grettum mentioned a consultant who had worked with the town of West Boylston that assists with developing long term plans, as a possible asset in our efforts.

Postings are in the works to advertise for replacements for Cemetery Superintendent and a Cemetery Commission Member. It's too early to advertise for a temporary seasonal employee.

The town Environmental Action Committee may wish to consult with us regarding the use of fertilizers or pesticides in town cemeteries.

Items not anticipated by the Chair 48 hours before meeting

None

Action Item Update

- P. Constantino – Contact the Historical Commission to find out more details about flagpole rejection.
- L. Grettum and G. Miranda – Continue evaluation of cemetery management software.
- L. Grettum – Continue discussions regarding Highway Department take-over of certain cemetery operations.

Schedule Next Meeting

Chair Grettum scheduled the next meeting for Monday February 14, 2022, to be held at 7:00 P.M. in the Town Hall Annex.

A motion was made to adjourn, seconded, and passed unanimously, 3-0.

Meeting adjourned at 8:24 P.M.

Submitted by Greg Miranda, Secretary
PCCminutes 1.14.2022