

**Princeton Cemetery Commission Meeting – Monday January 13, 2020**  
**Town Hall Annex - Small Meeting Room**  
**Minutes**

**Present:** Chair Charlie Steele, Paul Constantino, Greg Miranda and Lynne Grettum

**Absent:** Lou Trostel and Cemetery Superintendent Bill Bergstrom

**The meeting was called to order by Chairman Steele at 7:07 P.M.**

**Review of December 16, 2019 Meeting Minutes**

The minutes for December 16, 2019 were reviewed.

A motion was made L. Grettum to accept the minutes, seconded by C. Steele.

The motion passed. Vote: 3 – 0.

**Cemetery Superintendent’s Report**

In the absence of Superintendent Bergstrom, C. Steele reported that research regarding practices and regulations for green burial was continuing, with a meeting to be set up between B. Bergstrom and the Superintendent at Gardens of Gethsemane Cemetery in Roxbury, MA.

It was further noted that the current maintenance contract for the town cemeteries was expiring June 30, 2020 and is in need of renewal (see Budget section for more).

**2019 Annual Report**

The Cemetery Commission 2019 Annual Report, as drafted by C. Steele, was reviewed by the members. No changes were made (except for typos) and the report was approved as written.

**Green Burials**

The committee is awaiting the results from the Superintendent’s continuing research before drafting new regulations. There was some discussion about related questions which still remain, such as where a newly designated, separate green burial zone might be located, and the need for a process to allow lot-swapping for existing lot owners.

It is not certain if the cemetery grounds currently owned by the town have sufficient space for a new distinct area. This might be a time to consider finding an additional parcel to add to the cemetery system. A question was raised whether there might be any suitable locations within existing conservation lands in town that could be acquired for this purpose.

G. Miranda noted that the topic of green burials in Princeton had arisen as an area of interest for a future “town buzz” meeting. It was agreed to be a good idea and opportunity, to be addressed at a later date after we have drafted new regulations.

The implementation of green burials is a continuing agenda item for the Commission.

## **MS Access Database/Cemetery Management Software (CMS)**

The preceding discussion about difficulties involved with finding space for a green burial section in the town cemetery system only highlighted again the need for a more comprehensive data management system for cemetery records.

L. Grettum reported on the results of her query through the Town Clerk's office, in which other MA towns were asked what cemetery management software (CMS) packages they utilize? The response was too small to be significant as far as the number of users for a given CMS system, with only one or two users of any particular brand. It was informative in terms of actual systems in use and feedback about them, including vendors LL Data, Web Cemeteries, Pontam, Cemetery Find, and Ramaker. Lynne submitted a list of suggested requirements for CMS system evaluations, for the individual members to consider in their own online research.

Lynne also continues to sort through old physical cemetery records at the town hall, and to work on updating the existing MS Access database as much as possible. She anticipates some assistance with the process from Bruce Rollins in the spring.

It was noted that the IT Strategic Planning Committee should be involved as part of the decision-making process of choosing a CMS package.

## **FY 2021 Budget**

In the absence of Superintendent Bergstrom, L. Grettum pointed out that the current contract for routine maintenance of town cemetery grounds was expiring on June 30, 2020 and that a new contract was not yet in place. The expiring contract with New England Acreage originally ran through the periods of April 2018 – June 2018, July – June 2019, and July – June 2020. That was the initial period following a reorganization of cemetery services by the Town, in which the responsibilities for cemetery maintenance were transferred from town employees to outside contractors as managed by the Cemetery Superintendent. Following some early wrinkles, the new arrangement has been working well and the Commission is satisfied with the results.

There were questions among the commissioners regarding the process for renewing or rebidding the maintenance contract.

Regarding the budget for the current contract year, L. Grettum notified the committee of recent information that the maintenance contract had apparently gone overbudget, with the springtime portion still remaining. There were also some issues with billings going to the incorrect sub-account which needed attention.

Given the questions members had regarding the contract renewal process, the confusion over budget issues, and the desire to purchase a new software package, it was decided to invite the Town Administrator to the next meeting for some information and guidance.

In the meantime, C. Steele is to request the complete billing history for the maintenance company from the last several years, and will also request regular reports going forward.

**Items not anticipated by the Chair 48 hours before meeting**

None.

**Next Meeting – February 10, 2020**

Chairman Steele set the time and date for the next meeting, 7:00 P.M. on February 10, 2020 at the Town Hall Annex - Small Meeting Room.

G. Miranda motioned to adjourn, seconded by P. Constantino, passed 4 – 0.  
Meeting adjourned at 8:28 P.M.

Submitted by Greg Miranda, Secretary  
PCCminutes 2.6.2020