

TOWN OF BENNINGTON
CEMETERY TRUSTEES
Minutes of the Meeting- May 10, 2016
Minutes accepted on June 14, 2016

Present Karen Bartlett, chairman
 Joshua Segal
 Melissa Clark

Guests John Giffin (site walk)
 Colleen Giffin (site walk)
 Denise French, Town Administrator

Site walk

The Cemetery Trustees met with John and Colleen Giffin at Sunnyside Cemetery at 6:34 p.m. The members of the Cemetery Trustees had previously viewed the fence and gates as did the Giffins. It was noted that much of the fence is in good shape. The fencing along the road sides of the cemetery need work. The main gate has some rot and the side fencing is missing the bottom bar in places. The main gate has knobs and latches that do not work. It is possible to restore the gate to make it look as though it works and add a tab for a padlock to be used. It was also noted that there are some posts that are bent and spikes that are missing. Previously it had been suggested that the back braces on the fence sections could be eliminated and the posts made larger. This would not be recommended as the back braces are set in stone or cement. Mr. Giffin will provide a quote for the gate to be repaired and installed as well as a quote for center sections of the fence to be repaired and installed. The old fence sections will be disposed of as scrap after the reusable pieces are saved. The Town will keep all of the old spikes to use as repairs are needed. Joshua noted that the winter was very rough on the cemetery. Many stones are in need of repair. Joshua has estimated that the repairs will cost around \$5000.

The Trustees resumed the meeting at the Town Hall.

The minutes of the April 12, 2016 meeting were reviewed and accepted with a minor correction. Chairman Bartlett thanked the Recording Secretary for reflecting what has actually been said at meetings. Joshua was in agreement and noted that the reference to the Butler lot is actually the site near the Butler lot, but was identified in error.

Chairman Bartlett stated that she has asked the Trustees of the Trust Funds for the amount available for use in the Trust Fund. At this time no information has been received.

Joshua noted that there are 3 markers down in Sunnyside Cemetery and 12 other markers that are in danger. The estimated cost to fix the leaning markers is approximately \$200 each. There is one marker that is broken off and will need more work. Joshua strongly recommended the repair of 15 markers. He also suggested that the Trustees ask Mr. Kaufold for a quote on the repair work. Joshua stated that it is his opinion that the repair of the stones is more important than the fence project. Melissa agreed that the stones are a priority. It was noted that a trust fund has been set up for Sunnyside Cemetery and the donor is interested in the repair of the fence.

At 7:15 p.m. Town Administrator, Denise French met with the Trustees to share information. Prior to the termination of perpetual care, when a deed was processed, 1/3 of the price was given to the Town and 2/3 was given to perpetual care. There has been no warrant article to split the funds from the sale of the lots so all money has been put into the General Fund. The Trustees will need to put a warrant article on the ballot in 2017 to correct this. As the sale of lots is the sale of Town property, the Selectmen need to sign the Cemetery Deeds. Chairman Bartlett has been researching this and found that the Cemetery Trustees have been signing the deeds since at least 2000. Administrator French recommended that a joint statement from the Cemetery Trustees and the Selectmen be written acknowledging the error and stating that the deeds are valid. In moving forward, when a lot is sold by the Cemetery Trustees, the deed will be forwarded to the Selectmen for signatures along with the payment. Once the signatures have been obtained, the deed will be forwarded to the Town Clerk for a signature and the Town Clerk will make copies and mail the original deed to the purchaser.

Chairman Bartlett inquired of the Administrator of the Selectmen's decision on how the Town might show respect to Jill Young for her 20 plus years of service to the Cemetery Trustees. No decisions have been made.

Administrator French noted that she wanted to clear up any misconception of conflict between the Selectmen and the Cemetery Trustees. Chairman Bartlett agreed that there is a need for better communication between the Trustees and the Selectmen. It was noted that there is some frustration with the lack of communication at times. It was suggested that in the future, the Road Agent supply a copy of any invoices for materials he needs for cemetery projects to the Trustees.

There is much work that is needed in the cemeteries at this time due to time and weather. The Cemetery Trustees will check with the Selectmen for their thoughts on further funds for maintaining the cemeteries. Chairman Bartlett will draft a letter to the Selectmen to inquire about the possibility of encumbering funds and to propose the Trustees thoughts regarding the portion of funds to be available for the maintenance of the cemeteries from the sale of cemetery lots.

Joshua noted that he thought the price of a full burial lot had been changed. At this time the price has not been changed for a full lot. This discussion was tabled.

It was noted that the current fad for burials is to be buried in a biodegradable urn that will produce a tree. The Trustees will look at the bylaws as they are not in agreement of the planting of trees in the cemeteries.

In other business, it was noted that the Cemetery Trustees' Annual Seminar is scheduled for June 7, 2016 in Concord. Chairman Bartlett made a motion to send the Recording Secretary to the class and pay for her time and mileage. Joshua voted against this as he noted the Trustees could use the money in the Recording Secretary line item to help pay for some of the stone repair. Karen and Melissa voted that the Trustees send the Recording Secretary to the seminar.

As there was no other business at hand, the meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by

Debra Belcher
Cemetery Recording Secretary