

Cemetery Commission of Francestown Minutes of October 12, 2023 Meeting

Present: Polly Freese, Bridget Howell, Ethel MacStubbs (Trustees)
Janet Taft and Meg Hardwick (Alternates)

Jamie Pike (for discussion of budget and building and grounds)

Meeting Called to Order at 10:05 a.m.

Motion to Accept Minutes of Meeting of September 27, 2023 (as amended) by Ethel, seconded by Polly. Motion approved.

- Review of budget. Groundskeeping contract fees have increased for town, including cemetery. Electricity decreased. Trustees decide no increases needed in any other categories. 2024 total operating budget will be \$21,492.00. Motion by Ethel to approve 2024 Cemetery Budget, Polly seconds. Motion passed.
- Capital Expenditures – shed. Need repair or replacement of big shed.
 - Polly reports Larry Kullgren has agreed look at it and to give us estimate.
 - Funding. Jamie points out the Building Capital Reserve Fund was renamed in 1988 to “Improvement of New Cemetery Lands.” Around \$52,000 is balance. General Reserve Fund has about \$12,000.
 - Best alternative seems to be to submit to town (Planning Board) proposal as part of Capital Improvements Program (CIP) (to be voted on next March, Town Meeting). Deadline is October 19, but we hope to get round number estimate to submit and then “tweak” it with firm estimate at a later date.
 - Polly will get time from Larry as to meeting at shed next week.
- New lot sales. Ethel is working with Janes family. Ethel and Bridget will set up cemetery viewing of lots with Houston family. Memorial held for Diane Savage (previously buried in Cemetery 3).
- Bridget reports notice of reclamation of lot 239 (LeBonte) published in Ledger-Transcript on Oct 12. Ethel asks if notice form is too long, adding to cost. Bridget will research what other towns doing.
- Bridget gives report on 10/11/2023 Meeting of New Hampshire Cemetery Association (NHCA) held in Manchester. Best speaker was Mel from Life Forest Cemetery in Hillsboro. She gave link to Green Burial materials (10 page outline) which was extremely informative and Bridget notes she emailed that link to our group. Note : Life Forest only does cremains. Mel notes Lebanon does green burials for residents and non-residents and McCarthy, their sexton, will talk to people about it.

- Discussion of tech ideas – cemetery mapping (Plot Box, found by Meg) and using ground penetrating radar (GPR) to locate graves. Agreed we should explore grants we could get for this, as Plotbox notes. Janet notes we could contact someone investigating indigenous peoples burial sites and will look into this.
- Bridget talked to Virginia GPR company- minimum fee \$5,000 for using GPR for ground searches for burials. Bridget notes a speaker at NHCA meeting was Bob Perry of Topographix.com. He does burial mapping using aerial photography and GPR. He is very expensive and very busy.
- Bridget talked to Wilton Trustee who gave her 7 or so websites she found on-line that does GPR but Wilton Trustee has not yet contacted them. Bridget will forward list to our members.
- Discussion of creation of subcommittee on upgrading technology. Motion by Ethel. Bridget seconds. Motion passed. Discussion of how to form, preliminary thoughts are not to put out general notice but to select interested, capable people.
- Peters- Select Board of Francestown requests that CC trustees appear at Select Board meeting on Monday, October 16. Motion at 11:45 a.m. by Ethel to go into a non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (e) (pending claims). Motion seconded by Polly and passes. Motion made at noon by Ethel to exit non-public session and Polly seconds. Motion passed.
- Next meeting of Cemetery Commission will be October 25, 2023 at 9:00 a.m.
- Meeting adjourned at 12:05 p.m.