

Meeting of the Deerfield, New Hampshire Cemetery Trustees

DRAFT MINUTES

April 19, 2021

Present: Rick Druckenmiller, Sam White, Dana van der Bijl, Maureen Mann

Absent: Paul Murphy, Tina St. Peter

Meeting called to order at **9:30 am**. The board unanimously **accepted the minutes** of the **March meeting**.

Citizen Comments – None

Mark Young has verbally accepted a pared down employment agreement. He is away on business, but upon his return he is expected to sign the agreement to become **Superintendent of Cemeteries** at a pay rate of **\$5,000** per year, effective retroactively to March 1, 2021.

Dana reported that some progress has been made regarding the **perpetual care funds** in the cemetery accounts. A **document** is being drafted to clarify procedures and make it easier for Cemetery Trustees, the Board of Selectmen, and Trustees of the Trust Funds to efficiently work together moving forward. In the process of forming this document, it was discovered that Deerfield actually has **twenty-nine town-owned cemeteries** (as opposed to the currently recognized six). Clarification was obtained from the NH Municipal Association legal counsel that if a cemetery is on town-owned land, it is a town-owned cemetery and needs to be maintained as such. This will require further discussion with the Board of Selectmen.

The board unanimously voted to **raise the price of a single grave lot to \$550** effective June 1, 2021. The current price is \$200. The new price is more in line with the average for New Hampshire. In a survey of 22 New Hampshire towns, the highest price for a single lot was \$960 and the lowest price was \$200. The average of all 22 was \$541.

The board also unanimously voted to **establish a Cemetery Expenditure Fund** (details to be discussed with the Board of Selectmen) and to request that all proceeds from future lot sales be deposited into that account*. The account would be administered by the Cemetery Trustees and utilized for the care and maintenance of all cemeteries in the Town of Deerfield. This will help the town move away from adding to its problematic Cemetery Trust Fund/Perpetual Care accounts. This will not replace or change the current trust fund accounts, which are protected by RSA, but will make it easier for the board to make use of any new funds moving forward. Existing trust fund accounts would continue to accrue interest.

**289:2-a Funds Received From Sale of Cemetery Lots. – Upon the sale of cemetery lots, the legislative body may, at any annual or special meeting, vote to determine whether funds received from such sale shall be deposited in the general fund of the town as a sale of town property or deposited with the trustees of trust fund for the maintenance of cemeteries under RSA 31:19-a.*

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Dana will request a meeting with the Board of Selectmen and Trustee of the Trust Funds Joanna Waring to discuss the increased number of cemeteries, the trust funds, and the expenditure fund creation.

Progress has been made on the Google mapping of our cemeteries, and Dana has been in touch with the NH Department of Cultural Resources to see about inclusion in their online documentation. She has also been in touch with the DOT, which maintains an extensive cemetery database. Coordinates and other information will be provided to these departments to ensure that our cemeteries are documented in as many places as possible.

Sam White has agreed to attempt to locate the **Pulsifer Cemetery A-04**, which was thought to be located next to the Ladd Cemetery A-05 on South Road but is now known to be located elsewhere on South Road. The current owners of the property where the cemetery is located are aware of the search and have offered their full support and participation.

The next meeting will be held in the town gazebo on **Monday, May 17th at 9:30 am.**

Meeting adjourned at 10:38 am.

Respectfully submitted by Dana van der Bijl, Secretary