

City of Barre
Public Body Meeting Minutes
Draft

Committee: Cemetery

Date of special meeting: June 20, 2022
Hall, 2nd Floor

Location of Meeting: Alumni

Committee Members in attendance: Chairman Guiliano Cecchinelli, Director Jeff Bergeron, Assistant Director Stephanie Quaranta, Heather Ritchie, Ilene Gillander, Starr LeCompte

Committee Members absent: Renie Zanleoni, Mark Gherardi

Others in attendance: Councilman Michael Boutin

Meeting Called to order: 11:07 am

Motion Approved and seconded to accept minutes from May 16th and May 18th meetings.

Director's Report to Committee:

Director is still working on sending certified letters to the worst offenders of the Cemetery rules on decorations. He is having difficulty finding the necessary addresses. He expects that they will go out by next week.

Cemetery staff continues to be very busy with 15 burials (13 were cremations) and foundation repairs. There were 3 tours since the last meeting. Director continues to see brisk sales of lots. Cemetery financials continue to be well above projections.

This prompted discussion of future growth in both Hope and Elmwood Cemeteries. Lots are not available at St. Monica Cemetery as record keeping was inadequate. While there does appear to be some open lots in St. Monica, the Director cannot be sure that there is not someone already buried there.

Elmwood Cemetery is almost at full capacity. Director speculated that at the present rate of growth, we may be thinking about a 10-year time line for Hope. Director suggested that maybe we need to revisit the columbarium concept.

Discussion of funding for the columbarium project prompted Councilman Boutin to suggest that possibly ARPA funds might be used for this purpose. The Director indicated that he has applied for Congressional funds through the office of Senator Bernie Sanders in the amount of 3.5 million dollars. He is waiting for word on the status of that. The Director has also applied for \$800K from the City ARPA funds.

Director noted that he is at full staff with a couple of hires in the last month.

There are no new monuments requiring Committee approval.

New Business:

The Chairman welcomed Councilman Boutin, commenting that he was the first councilperson to attend one of this Committee's meetings. Councilman Boutin came before the Committee to discuss some modifications to the ordinance allowing dogs on cemetery grounds for all three of the city cemeteries. He is planning on modifying the ordinance to give the Committee authority to make decisions regarding what will and will not be permitted. The Councilman will put this proposed modification on the agenda for the next Council meeting.

Cemetery personnel will be authorized to inform the public of the ordinance. All enforcement of the ordinance will fall to the city police department.

Discussion continued between Councilman Boutin and Committee regarding the need to consider raising lot prices, especially for non-residents. At present city residents pay \$1880 for two lots with perpetual care. Non-residents pay \$2359 for two lots with perpetual care.

Perpetual care is 20% of the lot price at present. Mausoleum owners pay an additional fee to have perpetual cleaning done of their monuments. Two are done per year with these funds. BGA and Polycorp generously donate \$5K per year to clean monuments, something not included in the perpetual care cost. The Flower Fund is no longer offered. Monies collected do not cover the costs of flowers at today's rate. 90 percent of the "grand-fathered" flower cost is subsidized by the City coffers each year.

Councilman Boutin asked a question (raised by one of his constituents) regarding repair of the existing fountain at Hope Cemetery. He suggested that it would fall under a community fund request. The old fountain which has been out of service

since the City began metering water usage has been the source of much discussion at Committee meetings. The site of the old fountain is not easily supplied with electrical power which would be necessary to allow the recirculation of water for the fountain. Solar power panels have been considered but would require real estate and engineering. The Committee has discussed a desire to have a new fountain at a future date but there is much groundwork to be laid to accomplish this.

The Chairman thanked Councilman Boutin for his attendance.

Motion to Adjourn was made and seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 12:25 pm

Next scheduled meeting: July 18, 2022

Respectfully Submitted;

Starr Parnigoni LeCompte