

Freetown Cemetery Commission
Minutes of the Monday, January 5, 2015 Meeting
Town Hall, 3 North Main Street, Assonet, Mass.

Present: Keven Desmarais, Adrienne Levesque and Mike McCue.

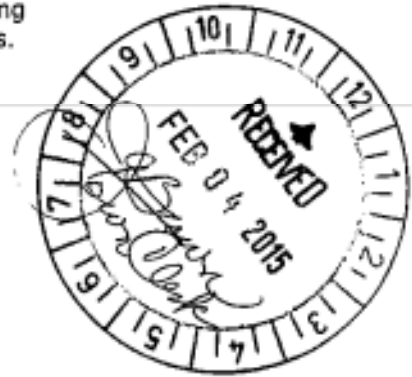
Call to order: Mike McCue called the meeting to order at 6:34p.

Approval of Minutes

No minutes were acted upon.

Mowing/Tree Bids for FY16

Mr. McCue presented recommendations for what work to bid out for FY16.



The first recommendation was to post the bid notices January 15th with a due date of February 20th. All agreed on consensus to follow this schedule and that the notices should be posted around town.

The second recommendation was that the Michael Hathaway Burial Ground, Quaker Hill Cemetery, Richmond Cemetery, and Winslow Cemetery not be bid out if the current year's prices could be renewed with the present contractors. It was explained that the Richmond and Winslow cemeteries were currently being mowed for a fraction of the previous prices (\$35.00 and \$75.00 compared to \$125.00 and \$200.00) and that the work being done was of excellent quality, that the Quaker Hill Cemetery is mowed two or three times a year for \$40.00 each time, and that the Michael Hathaway Burial Ground was more a matter of treating with weed killer and trimming than actually mowing. It was agreed on consensus not to bid these properties if the same prices could be held through June 30, 2016.

The third recommendation was to bid out all remaining cemeteries (Braley's Station, East Freetown, Evans, Morton, Mother's Brook, Plummer, and Tisdale). All agreed to bid out these cemeteries on the above schedule.

Discussion then turned to tree work. When the tree at Plummer Burial Ground was struck by lightning, it emphasized the need to address some of the older trees that remain after cemeteries are cleaned up and restored. These trees are mostly those that volunteers were not comfortable tackling, because of their size or proximity to headstones. On consensus, it was agreed to meet with the Tree Warden and at least one of our in-town arborists to assess those trees eyed for removal, and to then put the removal out to bid for inclusion as a warrant article at the Annual Town Meeting.

Prices of Graves

Mr. McCue stated that the prices of graves had not been seriously reviewed since 2007. At that time, the scale where the price per grave reduced as the number of graves increased was abandoned in favor of a flat \$800.00 per grave. It was noted that discussions have arisen from time to time as to whether to charge different rates for residents and nonresidents, whether to charge less or nothing at all in the Veterans Section, and whether to return to a price per grave scale.

Mr. Desmarais stated he had no problem with charging a separate rate to nonresidents. He and Mrs. Levesque both questioned scenarios where someone lived in town their whole life, but removed to nursing homes or other similar situations in later years. Mr. McCue stated that some towns have leeway where if a person resided in town for five or ten years during their lives, they could receive the resident rate, where a person who had never resided in town could not.

Mrs. Levesque asked what costs are associated with graves in the Veterans Section. Mr. McCue said that at present, a veteran's grave is \$500.00 and his or her spouse's grave is \$800.00. It was noted that this does not include the cost of the vault, opening and closing the grave, and any other related matters. Mr.

Desmarais asked the cost of opening and closing the graves, and Mr. McCue replied that this depended on who did the work; it could range from \$600.00 to over \$1,000.00. All agreed that if the town had more resources, it would be ideal to provide the vaults and openings at no cost. Mr. Desmarais suggested speaking to one or more of the gravediggers and asking if they could offer a reduced charge for this area.

Mrs. Levesque asked if the graves in the Veterans Section could be free. Mr. McCue responded that aside from the \$10.00 deed fee, which is set by the Town Clerk, the prices could be set as high or as low as the Commission wished. Mr. McCue asked should the Veterans Section be made free, should the discounted rates still apply in other areas of the cemetery? Mr. Desmarais and Mrs. Levesque both felt that the discounted rates should remain.

After all discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Desmarais, seconded by Mrs. Levesque, to adopt the following fee schedule:

Freetown Residents

♦ Traditional Grave:	\$ 750.00	(\$250.00 for lot, \$500.00 for perpetual care)
♦ Cremation Grave:	\$ 300.00	(\$150.00 for lot, \$150.00 for perpetual care)
♦ Veterans in general sections:	\$ 500.00	(\$500.00 for perpetual care only)
♦ Veterans in gen. sec., cremation:	\$ 150.00	(\$150.00 for perpetual care only)
♦ Veterans Section:	-- Free --	(Free for veterans and spouses)

Nonresidents

♦ Traditional Grave:	\$1,000.00	(\$500.00 for lot, \$500.00 for perpetual care)
♦ Cremation Grave:	\$ 500.00	(\$250.00 for lot, \$250.00 for perpetual care)
♦ Veterans in general sections:	\$ 500.00	(\$500.00 for perpetual care only)
♦ Veterans in gen. sec., cremation:	\$ 250.00	(\$250.00 for perpetual care only)
♦ Veterans Section:	-- Free --	(Free for veterans and spouses)

Persons not presently residing in Freetown may qualify for the resident rate if they previously resided in town for at least five years. When in doubt, the annual census records of the Town Clerk shall be proof of residency.

The motion was adopted unanimously.

Other Business Properly Before the Commission

Mr. Desmarais asked that the felled trees at East Freetown Cemetery be removed. Mr. McCue stated this was under the direction of the Tree Warden and he would speak with him.

Next Meeting

No further meetings were scheduled.

Meeting Adjourned

A motion was made by Mr. Desmarais, seconded by Mrs. Levesque, to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 7:05p.

This is a True Record by me.

Attest: _____
Michael T. McCue, Chairman

Freetown Cemetery Commission
Minutes of the Monday, January 26, 2015 Meeting
Town Hall, 3 North Main Street, Assonet, Mass.

Meeting Cancelled

Due to the impending blizzard, this meeting was cancelled and rescheduled to Friday, January 30th, at 6 p.m.

This is a True Record by me.

Attest: _____
Michael T. McCue, Chairman