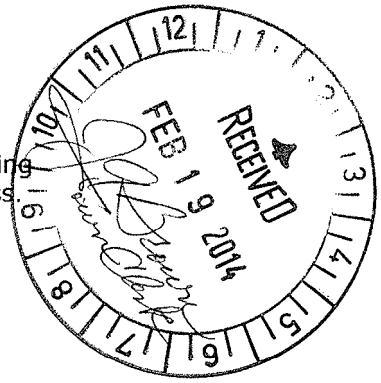


Freetown Cemetery Commission
Minutes of the Monday, January 6, 2014 Meeting
Town Hall, 3 North Main Street, Assonet, Mass.



Present: Keven Desmarais, Adrienne Levesque, and Mike McCue.

Call to order: Chairman Mike McCue called the meeting to order at 6:55p.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of October 31st and November 29th, 2013, were received. A motion was made by Mr. Desmarais, seconded by Mrs. Levesque, to approve the minutes as received. The motion carried unanimously.

Superintendent's Report

The November and December reports were received.

Civil War Preservation Grant

This program was brought to the attention of the commissioners by the Veterans Agent, Dan LeBlanc. The program provides matching grants for preservation projects related to the Civil War Sesquicentennial, including the procurement and installation of educational signage. Commissioners discussed the possibility of placing biographical information signs at the graves of John M. Deane and Ebenezer Peirce. Additional thoughts included a sign giving a brief history of the Assonet Burying Ground and a listing of Civil War soldiers and sailors buried on the property and paying labor costs for replacement stones (in situations where the Highway Department may not be capable of performing the work). Mr. Desmarais suggested seeing if a portion of the town's match to any grant could come from the in-kind contribution of having town workers performing work. All will be investigated before the application deadline of April 1st.

Solicitation of Bids

Commissioners discussed the feasibility of soliciting quotes or bids for the cemetery work that is still hired out. Mr. McCue explained that it had been several years since the cemeteries were rebid, and that the current proposal was born of the financial challenges besieging the Morton Cemetery.

Mr. Desmarais asked whether the bids would result in contracts. Mr. McCue said past practice has been to come to verbal agreements with the contractors, but that contracts could be considered. Mr. Desmarais asked if bidders would be required to have insurance. Mr. McCue said this has not been required in the past as it was believed requiring insurance would create higher rates, but that at least two of the three present contractors have insurance of one form or another.

Mrs. Levesque asked if it was necessary to use formal bids, or if the rates could be negotiated informally as in the past. Mr. Desmarais stated he believed the threshold for formal bids was \$10,000.00. Mr. McCue agreed, and stated that formal bids were not necessary. Mrs. Levesque expressed concern that formal bids, requiring insurance, could drive prices above what was typically budgeted. Mr. McCue reviewed how prices have been negotiated in the past. All agreed that the current contractors have been very fair in their pricing and very efficient in their work.

Mr. Desmarais asked whether it was practical to hire part-time workers. Mr. McCue said that this subject has been raised several times in different forms, and the selectmen have never been receptive to the idea for reasons that are unknown. It was noted this has been through various selectmen, not necessarily limited to those currently in office.

Mrs. Levesque asked what needed to be done if formal bids were not undertaken. Mr. McCue stated that the payments were so minimal overall that "sound business practices" were likely all that was needed. Mr. Desmarais stated this typically requires gathering three prices. It was noted there are currently three contractors, and that a fourth individual has expressed an interest.

It was agreed on consensus to contact the three current contractors, plus the fourth interested party, and to solicit prices for comparison.

Inmate Labor

Discussion was held on whether to request the use of inmate labor in any of the cemeteries. Inmate crews from the House of Correction in North Dartmouth often provide labor and services to communities in Bristol County. Commissioners reviewed the types of work that might be undertaken by the inmate crews, ranging from full-scale maintenance to minor projects.

Mrs. Levesque asked whether the inmates come equipped to perform the work, and Mr. McCue responded that the Cemetery Commission would need to provide any tools or materials necessary. Mr. Desmarais was concerned that the investment in equipment may not be practical if the inmates could not be employed as regularly as may be needed.

Mr. Desmarais suggested contacting the House of Correction to inquire about spring clean-ups and placing mulch in advance of Memorial Day. This was agreed to on consensus.

Next Meeting

No further meetings were scheduled.

Meeting Adjourned

A motion was made by Mr. Desmarais, seconded by Mrs. Levesque, to adjourn at 8:30p. The motion carried unanimously.

This is a True Record by me.

Attest: Michael T. McCue
Michael T. McCue, Chairman