

Freetown Cemetery Commission
Minutes of the Monday, January 4, 2021 Meeting
Town Hall — Assonet, Mass.

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Present: Adrienne Levesque and Mike McCue were present at the Town Hall. Kevin Desmarais participated by phone.

Call to order: Mike McCue called the meeting to order at 4:10 p.m.

Receipt of Minutes / Superintendent's Report

The minutes August 31, 2020 were received, as were the Superintendent's reports for September, October, November, and December. A motion was made by Mr. Desmarais, seconded by Mrs. Levesque, to approve the minutes and reports as received. The motion carried unanimously.

Seasonal Labor

- Discussion was held on Tim Dacey's pay rate. The Cemetery Commission proposed a change in rate in November 2019, but the Board of Selectmen never acted on that proposal. Mr. McCue presented two budgeting scenarios, one that left the pay rate fixed to minimum wage and one that showed the rate set at minimum wage plus 50 cents. Mr. Desmarais felt the difference was negligible, and suggested setting the rate \$1.00 above minimum wage. Mrs. Levesque agreed, stating we were happy with Mr. Dacey's work. A motion was made by Mr. Desmarais, seconded by Mrs. Levesque, to request that the pay rate be set at \$1.00 above minimum wage beginning July 1, 2021. The motion carried unanimously.
- No discussion was held as to the work week or schedule for the Sexton.

FY22 Budget & Warrant Articles

- Although a draft budget was briefly reviewed, no substantial discussion was held. To date, budget proposals for FY22 have not been requested.

Assonet Burying Ground

- On the subject of the new flag pole, Mr. Desmarais noted the need to find someone familiar and competent with welding aluminum to render the light pole into a flag pole. A complaint from Howard Hawkins about the lack of a flag pole was also noted; Mr. Hawkins was not the first person to complain about the pole, but we are limited by funding, weather, and the need to find someone to do the work.
- Mr. Desmarais stated that Cameron Desmarais is on the hunt for an appropriate tractor or utility cart, likely a golf cart with utility body. This morphed into a discussion on the "old" shed, as it was acknowledged that any utility vehicle would need a place to live. The Building Department will be advised that we are trying to procure a cart and will need the old shed repaired or some other suitable storage building. (Note: The "new" shed is not large enough.)
- No news was reported on the subject of the fence.
- Mr. McCue addressed the need to ensure headstones are placed in a straight line, both in the Veterans Section and elsewhere. Discussion ensued, and Mr. Desmarais put forth the idea of placing guides – rebar or otherwise – to tie off string to form a guideline.

Right-of-way or Access Concerns

- As to the Capt. Job Terry Burial Ground and Robinson Burying Ground, Mr. Desmarais engaged the site superintendent on the Copart project in a discussion about access to the cemeteries. Tom Copeland will have access as needed while construction continues, and should have even easier access after construction is completed and the company is operating.

- The pile of dirt partially blocking access to the Nichols Cemetery remains a mystery, but Mr. Desmarais does not believe it will prohibit Mr. Copeland from accessing.

Updates on Old Business or New Business

- Mr. McCue noted the need to have some tree removal work done, but had no new information.
- No updates are available on headstone straightening or repair.
- Mr. McCue raised again the need to find additional cemetery land, stating that although there is no space crunch now, the time will come in the future when land will be needed. He suggested it might not be necessary to buy large spaces like the Assonet Burying Ground anymore, that as cremation becomes more popular it may be sufficient to buy smaller tracts.

Other Business Properly Before the Commission

No items were taken up under this heading.

Meeting Adjourned

At 4:44 p.m., Mr. Desmarais' phone connection was lost. A motion was then made by Mrs. Levesque, seconded by Mr. McCue, to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

This is a True Record by me.

Attest: _____
Michael T. McCue, Chairman