

**Freetown Cemetery Commission**  
Minutes of the Wednesday, December 1, 2010 Meeting  
Town Hall, 3 North Main Street, Assonet, Mass.

**Present:** Keven Desmarais and Mike McCue.

**Absent:** Adrienne Levesque.

**Guests:** Stephanie Leombruno of the *Standard-Times*.

**Call to order:** Chairman Mike McCue called the meeting to order at 7:00p.

**Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of November 3rd were received and read by Mr. Desmarais. A motion was made by Mr. Desmarais, duly seconded by Mr. McCue, to approve the minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

**Correspondence**

Mr. McCue presented the letter to be sent to area funeral homes providing information on the East Freetown Cemetery, and the list of licensed gravediggers. No additions, deletions, or corrections were suggested. A motion was made by Mr. Desmarais, duly seconded by Mr. McCue, to mail the letter, rules and regulations, and gravediggers' list to all area funeral homes, and to post the same on the town's website. The motion carried unanimously. The commissioners present then entertained questions from Miss Leombruno regarding the East Freetown Cemetery.

**Assonet Burying Ground**

Mr. McCue presented the standard contract/agreement form provided by the Town Accountant for purchases over \$5,000.00, to be used to firm up the commission's agreement with Greg Myers for 2011. A discussion was held on the price of seasonal cleanup, wherein it was noted that the quoted price was \$2,000.00, that the price of \$2,000.00 had been the estimate for 2010, and that the amount billed for 2010 was \$2,400.00. It was also noted that the leaves were simply blown to the edge of the property and not removed. Mr. McCue stated he had discussed with Mr. Myers the removal of leaves from the Evans Cemetery, as that cemetery's trustees were dissatisfied with the pile of leaves left on the property. They were also concerned about the appearance that leaves from the cemetery were being dumped over the stone wall and onto Larry Tate's property.

Those present signed the agreement, and it was agreed on consensus that Mr. Myers be asked to appear at a meeting in early 2011 to sign the agreement. This would also afford Mr. Desmarais and Mrs. Levesque the opportunity to meet him and ask him any questions they might have.

Discussion next turned to the fence and to insurance. Subsequent to the last meeting, South East Fence Co. had offered to reduce their quote by \$95.00 if the town arranged for the removal and disposal of the damaged sections of fence. It was agreed on consensus to accept the lower price and proceed with the work. As for insurance, Mr. McCue reported there was a hiccup in insuring the cemetery fence and buildings because the insurance company wanted the assessed value thereof, and the Assessors have never placed a value on them. Mr. Desmarais suggested contacting one of the Assessors and asking them to price out the structures and fence to move this along. Mr. McCue will follow up with them.

**Haskins Cemetery**

Mr. McCue reported the deed for this cemetery was recorded on November 17th. It is now town property.

**Michael Hathaway Burial Ground**

Mr. McCue reported his research with regard to the ownership of this cemetery. The cemetery is owned by the Estate of Lucy S. Terry, who died in 1966 and is buried in the Assonet Burying Ground. An equal (50%) interest is believed to be owned by the Estate of Caroline H. Winslow, who died in 1950 and is also buried at the Assonet Burying Ground. Mrs. Winslow and Mrs. Terry inherited their shares from Anthony D. Hathaway,

who died in 1916 and is buried at the Assonet Burying Ground. The mailing address for Mrs. Winslow's estate is in care of Bank of America; for Mrs. Terry, it is in care of a law firm in Fall River. The mailing address will be recorded as the law firm's address.

### **Nichols Cemetery**

No further contact has been received from the Nichols family since July. Mr. McCue suggested obtaining written permission, preferably in the form of an easement, for the Cemetery Commission to allow volunteers to clean up the cemetery if any come forward. Although the commission can allow this by law, he felt that due to the cemetery's distance from any road and reliance on crossing private property, an easement would be good backup. Mr. Desmarais noted a previous occasion, many years ago, when volunteers were thrown out of a cemetery by well-meaning neighbors who were unaware the rightful owner supported the volunteers' efforts, and that state law allows this maintenance with or without permission.

### **Winslow Cemetery**

No further information was available to report, other than that a lead was obtained in the contact information for Ethel Paull's heirs.

### **Perpetual Care Letter**

Additional information was provided regarding the perpetual care situation for the Nichols and Richmond cemeteries. This information, along with a copy of a letter from 1984 in which a similar correction was requested for the Evans Cemetery, will be forwarded to the Treasurer and Town Accountant.

### **Budget for FY12**

Mr. McCue stated he had prepared two budgets for FY12: one in which it was assumed the Highway Department would provide some of the cemetery maintenance, and one in which it was assumed they would not. The Highway Department's agreement to take on some of the workload was contingent upon their hiring an additional employee. Mr. Desmarais expressed his preference that we operate on the assumption that no employee will be hired until such time as steps are taken to actually hire an employee. In light of that, the second budget was reviewed.

The preliminary total for the second budget, subject to fine-tuning, was given as \$21,123.00, an increase of \$14,648.00 over the total budget for the present fiscal year (\$4,400.00 prior to the November 8th special town meeting, and \$6,475.00 subsequent thereto). The lines were then discussed as follows:

- **East Freetown Cemetery** to be budgeted at \$1,000.00. As our agreement with the DeMoranvilles is for \$1,000.00 per year, this number cannot be any lower. This is a reduction of \$45.40 from the present year, that money having been spent this year on the death register book for that cemetery.
- **Assonet Burying Ground** to be budgeted at \$15,000.00. At present, there is approximately \$4,000 remaining in expendable perpetual care for this cemetery. At the current rate, we expect this money will be entirely depleted prior to June 30, 2011, which will mean there is no perpetual care available for FY12, and the town must therefore appropriate its usual share plus the share usually borne by perpetual care. This is an increase from the \$3,536.00 budgeted in the present year.
- **Richmond Cemetery** to be budgeted at \$500.00. This will cover four mowings at \$125.00 each, and is the same as the amount budgeted for this year.
- **Winslow Cemetery** to be budgeted at \$600.00. This will cover three mowings at \$200.00 each, and is the same as the amount budgeted for this year.
- **East Chipaway cemeteries (Braley East and Braley West)** to be budgeted at \$1,000.00. In the present year, \$400.00 was budgeted to clean up Braley (East). We anticipate it will cost at least \$1,000.00 to keep these cemeteries mowed in FY12.

- **Mother's Brook Cemetery** to be budgeted at \$2,000.00. This is an increase of \$1,999.00 over the amount budget in the present year, and represents the change in direction from the City of Fall River taking over this cemetery to the town maintaining its responsibility. The amount budgeted is expected to cover mowings, and to repair several headstones.
- **Map Maintenance** to be budgeted at \$1,000.00. This is an increase from the \$375.00 expended in this present year, and is intended to finally have mapping done at the Assonet Burying Ground. Mr. McCue expressed his belief that this mapping could not be delayed any further. The existing map dates from 1993, and does not reflect any graves sold or sections opened since that time.
- **Printing and Postage** to be budgeted at \$23.00, an increase from \$17.60 in the present year. This would allow for 50 first-class mailings at a postage rate of 46¢. Mr. McCue was advised by a postal clerk that the Post Office had attempted to raise the first class rate to 46¢ in 2010, and had every intention of trying again in 2011.

Mr. Desmarais inquired as to how the budget is usually prepared. Mr. McCue stated that past practice, dating to before his time on the Cemetery Commission, was that the chairman write and submit the budget. He expressed his preference that a vote be taken on the 2012 budget in light of the difficulty faced in trying to submit the 2011 budget. A motion was made by Mr. Desmarais, duly seconded by Mr. McCue, to approve the budget as a working draft. The motion carried unanimously.

#### **Next Meeting**

A meeting will be scheduled in January.

#### **Meeting Adjourned**

Upon motion of Mr. Desmarais, duly seconded by Mr. McCue, the commission voted to adjourn at 8:12p. The motion carried unanimously.

This is a True Record by me.

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