

Somers Cemetery Committee  
Meeting minutes – July 13, 2022



1. Call to order 6:35
2. members present: Ann Levesque, Patricia Bachetti, David McCaffrey, Patricia Loftus (chair)
3. Review and vote to approve May minutes: passed 4/0
4. Committee Reports:
  - a. Finance – Brian Wissinger – not present, see information in the business office. Profit / Loss statement as of 6.30.22 shows a loss of 37,538.91. Loss due to repaving of the entire driveway @\$34,407.31 and the “plaza” surrounding the columbarium @ \$14,520.43. Without these two expenses there would have been a profit of \$11,388,83. Committee agreed this was money well spent and will extend the life and usability of the property. The project done by Frank’s Landscaping on the columbarium “plaza” has been heartily approved of by the committee. This will make any service - mud, snow and dust free. Job well done.
  - b. Sexton – Long discussion about the “business” of how other cemeteries and ours is run and how it has changed and will continue to change due to the fast pace changes in how society sees and uses this type of property. Good background from Jay especially for newer committee members who may not have heard this information before. This information included the newer challenge of shortage of materials including stone and trained, talented artisans.
  - c. Landscaping – No representative present, no response to email requesting either a representative or information exchange.
  - d. American Legion – No report (P. Martinello)
  - e. Veteran’s Office – D. McCaffrey – foundry in MA still back order of ground-based flag supports.
  - f. DPW – No report
5. Old Business :
  - a. Shrub removal in Old West – no report
  - b. Report on Socha possible buy back. No report on completion.
  - c. Review of changes to buy back policy. Changes voted on: passed 4/0. Proposed policy to go to the Bd. Of Selectmen for approval.
  - d. Sexton – Soil on several new gravesites have settled and have had additional soil applied along with grass seed. (Now we need rain.)
6. New Business:
  - a. Private grave stone columbarium pricing is the same as a regular burial or use of our columbarium. Confirmed with Jay D’Aleo with his updated pricing as presented to the business office.
  - b. Report from Ann Levesque on an update after our “NO” vote on the idea of a doggie waste station in Center Cemetery. It was considered counter to our long-stated rule of no dogs in the cemetery. As of today, there isn’t a group of volunteers established to lobby for a dog park and this is beyond our mission.
  - c. Historic gravestone restoration expert J. Appell has been messaged to review critical needs and as of May’s meeting has a budget of \$5,000.00 for 2022 work. He has not as of tonight’s meeting responded. (I received a message after the meeting that he’d been

teaching out of state and had not heard the message in time for tonight's meeting. He will review our needs and with verbal approval from the chair begin work this season.)

d. Brian Wissinger requested that the committee, through a client's phone request (Kulas), combine plots #350 & #351 in Center cemetery in order to have a combination headstone. No written request to the committee has been received at this time.

e. Request through Brian Wissinger per a conversation he'd had with a vendor to reseed, fertilize, (lime?), and have a watering system made available or installed. After much research and attempting to get prices, the chair found that the water company no longer rents or leases temporary meters so a price for watering is not available. In any case a line would have had to be run from the hydrant next to Woodcrest to the cemetery with LDH (large diameter hose) and then with a series of gated valves lower and split the pressure in order to feed multiple newly purchased hoses of the garden variety plus use of multiple high / overhead sprinklers all on timers. The cost of reseeding and fertilizing is listed in the landscaper's contract at close to \$800.00 per application of each product for just Center Cemetery. Any watering would be prohibitive in cost. It would appear that this type of program could cost in excess of \$10,000.00 and then the cost of mowing would increase as well. All hard materials would have to be laid out, run and stored by DPW which would put a burden on them which is not part of their responsibility.

At this time no other cemetery in north central CT has been shown to have this type of program or is able to fund this type of expense. Having checked with a few cemeteries outside the north central area none were found to have engaged in this type of program.

List of considerations for September meeting:

Investigate (SIMMS?) software to register all gravesites in town and have the information available online for the public.

Meeting adjourned: 8:40 PM

Respectfully submitted,  
Patricia Loftus - chair