

Somers Cemetery Committee

Meeting minutes - November 9, 2022

1. Call to order 6:45
2. Members present: Pat Bachetti, David McCaffrey, David Morgan, Pat Loftus (chair)
Absent: Ann Levesque
3. Review, correct if needed and vote to approve September's minutes:
Motion/Pat Bachetti, 2nd David McCaffrey, passed 4/0 (David Morgan September guest and to be renewed member as of November's meeting)
4. Committee Reports:
 - A. Finance – Brian Wissinger, not present, reports on file
Concern expressed over fuel surcharges of which we not notified until tonight.
 - B. Sexton – Jay D'Aleo present. Answered written question from Brian over fee collection on a combination of digging, marking and sexton jobs. Jay explained for new members that we had had a separate grave digger in the past and that if that becomes a factor again why have to re-negotiate separate prices. Keep the fees separate and transparent.
 - C. Landscaping – John Guzie, not present, no report. We will expect a report on the fuel surcharges and when and how notification was received and by whom.
 - D. American Legion – Paul Martinello, not present, no report.
 - E. Veteran's Office – David McCaffrey. Friday Veteran's day services planned for noon. Saturday, December 17th, laying of Wreaths Across America by veterans and Somers Girl Scouts. Delivery is to the SFD. See the Somers Veterans' Office FB page for details. **IF** you wish to purchase and donate specifically to Somers' veterans' grave sites the link is: wreathsacrossamerica.org/CT131P. The code for Somers is **CTWEST**. Without the specific code the donation becomes a general donation.
 - F. DPW – Todd Rolland, no report

Old Business:

A. Report made on conditions of the 2 active cemeteries in regards to numerous infractions of the Town of Somers rules and regulations as printed and on signs. Several sites have been cleaned of old decorations either by the deed / certificate holder or the landscaping company, exactly who is unknown for each of several sites. A considerable number more have items not allowed and not yet removed. Brian Wissinger had stated in a September conversation with the chair that the privately planted shrubs at Center, (done without permission) can be removed in the spring even though fall clean-up had not yet begun. He also stated during the same conversation that several years ago stickers provided to the landscaping contractor had been placed at a number of sites and items were removed by private persons. He said the program was considered a success. He'd like to go back to it. Discussion evolved around the use of these stickers. Neither Sexton Jay D'Aleo, nor three of the committee members had ever spotted these and need to confirm they were used in a Somers Cemetery and not somewhere else.

One letter (email form) was received on the matter and the writer did speak tonight with great displeasure on being "singled out" during a difficult time. She allowed for no answers from the committee.

Movement of the New West sign listing rules, which had been placed at the back of the cemetery rather than remain in a prominent position close to the roadside was not discussed. (Move to January meeting for spring placement by DPW.)

Old West had at least 1 dead tree removed by DPW per request from David McCaffrey to Todd Rolland. Removal observed by chair, crew thanked.

New Business:

A. Discussion lead by David Morgan on what we'd see as needs from a digital management program. At this point a combination of records from both the town and the sexton would be needed in order to upgrade to something usable. The ledger belonging to the town and the notebook provided to the town by the sexton have different fields of information and it would be very time consuming to meld them into a cohesive document. How that would be done and by whom is a discussion to be held with administration. General costs for town budget planning should be forwarded to administration to be included in spring planning of the 2023 budget year.

B. Discussion continued on the 2014 published Town Regulations and Rules with some items to be reworded as they no longer apply. Assignment pushed to January with the idea of a sub-committee doing more of the work as it is extensive.

B.(2.) Buy back policy discussed in Jan, Mar, & May. Draft is ready for Bd. of Selectmen but should it wait to be included in new Rule / Reg packet? It is not yet in effect.

C. Open House discussion (funeral director as part of an educational workshop on pre-planning) delayed to January meeting due to medical leave of the lead committee member and late running meeting tonight.

D. Vote to pay for lamination of maps prepared for committee use and Open House. (\$132.00) Motion to approve / David Morgan, 2nd David McCaffrey

Addition: Chair report: After research on the 26 town committees, commissions, boards, advisory groups, trustees on use of public comment sessions built into meetings the chair found that Cemetery Committee is not the only one without specific designation in fact most do not. The Cemetery Committee has always offered a written path through the Business Office for a citizen to be placed on the agenda. It is believed this had been on the Cemetery tab of the town web page but for some reason was removed.

Patricia Loftus chair (interim secretary)

Adjournment: 8:51 PM

Next meeting: January 11, 2022