

Somers Cemetery Committee
Regular meeting minutes 3.8.2023

1. Call to order: 6:31 PM
2. Members present: David Morgan, Ann Levesque, Pat Bachetti, Pat Loftus (chair), NP: David McCaffrey
3. Public Comment: Paul Martinello, American Legion representative spoke during the public comment portion as he'd not been added to the agenda. Paul told us the AL Post 101 used the special fire pit at Center Cemetery last Saturday to respectfully burn 20 bags of flags. Ashes do have a special underground receptacle on the cemetery grounds.
4. Vote to approve January's minutes. As corrected: Add Center Cemetery to WAA listing. Correct one typo. Motion: Ann Levesque, second Pat Bachetti. Vote to approve passes 4/0.
5. Committee reports:
 - a. Finance – Morgan Stanley investment representatives not present.
Brian Wissinger not present.
 - b. Both finance representatives sent hard copy reports.
 - c. Landscaping: John Guzie, reported that the fuel charge was misnamed. It is a 10% price increase across the board for all his customers. It will not be going away. The rise in price became effective on July 1, 2022 and was not reported to the committee in a timely fashion. When asked what part of his service in the cemeteries is the most difficult or frustrating he responded that the amount of decorations (not unique to Somers but more found here than other places) is more time consuming to get around. Shepherd hooks in particular are a problem for those on mowers as they are at face level for the mower driver. He has also had issues with dog walkers not picking up after their dogs. At one point several years ago he (or a crew representative) had to call for the state police to resolve a confrontation. The cemetery committee was never notified of this. He has been asked to let us know whenever there is an issue, especially of this magnitude. In addition, there are times his crew is overwhelmed with items to be placed in the collection area behind Center. Gaining control of the amount is important to not having it expand to the point of no return.

He also stated he wasn't sure just who was his boss. He had been told that he didn't have to come to meetings and now he's hearing he should be attending. He was told by the Chair that this will be resolved shortly.

Note: On the business office report as of February 28, 2023 there is a fee for tree trimming for \$3537.76. An explanation of where and when will be expected by Mr. Guzie at the May meeting.

d. Sexton – Jeff Buckley, the first issue is that he had to remove large rocks from around a flat to the ground grave marker in Center Cemetery. Per regulations any edging of any kind is not allowed and may be removed without notice. Flat markers are to remain mow able.

Second, pricing for foundations has not been increased for a number of years. The price of cement / concrete has increased substantially. A new pricing schedule had been sent to Mr. Wissinger but not forwarded to the committee. Mr. Buckley will send his listing to the Chair. Under New Business (Adding heading C) will be a vote on accepting the wholesale pricing to be sent to the Board of Selectmen along with the mark up for the town.

6. Old Business:

A. An RFP to map expansion to Center has not been done. A request from Mr. Wissinger to be specific about what section is to be included will be brought up under new business. (The Committee voted to include all of section 2 only. This encompasses all of the surrounding area from the Lipton family plot clockwise surrounding the center oval up to the driveway leading to the rear collection lot.)

B. Buy Back Policy – status report. A draft was received from the town today and had been reviewed by the town attorney per request of Selectman Meier. It will be presented for a vote by the Board of Selectmen tomorrow night at its regularly scheduled meeting. NOTE: One change from the draft is an addition of the last sentence – “The Board of Selectmen shall have the sole discretion to decide whether or not the plots shall be repurchased by the Town.”

C. Ordinance – status report. An Ordinance concerning cremated remains of humans being left, scattered or buried on town land not including approved use of a town cemetery to be brought before the Board of Selectmen tomorrow night. Back Story: Concerns were brought to First Selectman Keeney by the Chair on December 6, 2022 and were to have been forwarded to the Town Attorney with urgency. A draft of the ordinance was sent to the Chair this afternoon. It is broader than anticipated (includes pet cremains) and has a fine that is less than market pricing of a burial due to a cap on fines. Update: At the Board of Selectmen’s meeting on March 9, 2023 the board voted to go to a public hearing

on the ordinance in late April. A copy of the ordinance may be included with the Board of Selectmen's minutes.

D. Job Descriptions – Written documents will be finalized and readies for a vote at a special meeting on Tuesday March 21, 2023. Meeting to be posted.

E. rules and Regulations – Rewrite delayed until job descriptions are clear and approved.

7. New Business –

A. Job Descriptions to be finalized at a special meeting 3.21.2023.

B. Digital Management software: Mr. Wissinger asked that we arrange for a special meeting to have a zoom interaction with a vendor he has researched. Looking over the materials provided, the committee decided to not include this particular vendor in our list of choices as they do not address a number of the issues we were looking to have answers to. Mr. Morgan will provide the names of the 3 top national companies for us to review product and interview.

C. Acceptance of the new whole sale price list is accepted. Wholesale pricing was presented at generally, depending on size of the foundation at \$110.00 per sq. foot. Motion: David Morgan, 2nd Pat Loftus Vote: 4/0 passes A markup pricing will be discussed at a special meeting 3.21.23.

D. Vote to approve a special meeting on 3.21.2023 to be held at town hall.
Passed.

Meeting adjourned: 8:30

Next meeting: Special 3.21.23. Next regularly scheduled meeting May 10,2023

Respectfully submitted: Patricia Loftus - interim secretary