

**TOWN OF LUDLOW
BOARD OF CEMETERY COMMISSIONERDS**

SPECIAL MEETING

Wednesday April 23, 2014

Board Members Present:

Herb VanGuilder
Lou Gabranski

Nataile Gruber
Marty Nitka

Board Members Absent:

Brett Sanderson

Others Present:

Robert Brandt

SITE REVIEW AT PLEASANTVIEW CEMETERY

1. Board convened at 5:00 p.m. at the Pleasantview Cemetery for site review and discussion. Herb Van Guilder, Lou Gabranski and Marty Nitka were present.

SPECIAL MEETING

2. Call to Order

- A. Meeting was called to order by Chairman, Herbert VanGuilder at 5:35 p.m.

3. Approve Minutes

- A. Herbert VanGuilder advised that the minutes to be approved were from September 18, 2013 and April 16, 2014.
- B. Herb Van Guilder noted that on the minutes of September 18, 2013, on page 1, item 4Aiii should read "Herb Van Guilder said Benson's."
- C. **MOTION by Lou Gabranski and seconded by Nataile Gruber to approve the minutes from September 18, 2013 as corrected. Motion passed unanimously.**
- D. On the minutes of April 16, 2014, it was noted that on page 1, the date was listed as April 17th.
- E. **MOTION by Marty Nitka and seconded by Lou Gabranski to approve the minutes of April 16, 2014 as corrected. Motion passed unanimously.**

4. Comments from Citizens

- A. There were none.

5. Old Business

- A. Review Pavement Bids

- i. Herb Van Guilder advised that during the site visit, they went over all locations to be paved. Springfield Paving has submitted a bid that was broken down by area. The total is \$31,570 (including the upper end by the pond, swale work to consist of a 1" asphalt overlay after the shim. The work for the entrance would be \$17,620 and that is the biggest area.
- ii. Marty Nitka asked if the bid included everything they looked at the site visit.
- iii. Herb Van Guilder said yes, including swale work.
- iv. Marty Nitka asked if it included both swales.
 - v. Herb Van Guilder said yes.
- vi. Lou Gabranski asked about the 2 dirt roads.
- vii. Herb Van Guilder said no, and that they had not put anything in the budget for paving the new cemetery area, yet. He added that they also have a quote from M&M for prep construction work in the amount of \$5,600. It includes digging, swale work, and the strip by the entrance and prep work for the ditch line. He said that he has spoken with the Municipal Manager and Frank Heald said that he felt that the bigger companies that do the road work in town may not want to do smaller jobs. Herb Van Guilder said that he had called Wilke and also Wilk and no one has returned his called.
- viii. Marty Nitka asked if Springfield was the only bidder.
- ix. Herb Van Guilder said yes. He said that they called other companies but no responses and the office put it on the computer. He added that they had not gotten any better response when they put bid requests in the papers.
 - x. Lou Gabranski asked if it is legal to only get one bid.
- xi. Marty Nitka said projects should be put out for bids and that he would feel more comfortable knowing we get the word out more.
- xii. Herb Van Guilder said that when they leveled out the future site, they contacted 7 to 8 contractors and only received one bid.
- xiii. Marty Nitka asked where on the web did they put the bids.
- xiv. Herb Van Guilder said they would have to ask Pam Cruickshank in the office. He added that in addition to the \$5,600 bid from M&M, M&M also submitted a bid for \$700 for the big sluiceway as it needs a berm. He said that they really need to try to get this work done before Memorial Day.
 - xv. Marty Nitka asked the total for all of the work.
- xvi. Herb Van Guilder said around \$41,000.
- xvii. Marty Nitka read the following area bids
 - a. M&M \$5,600
 - b. M&M \$ 700
 - c. Springfield \$17,520
 - d. Springfield \$ 4,200
 - e. Springfield \$5,980
 - f. Springfield \$5,200
 - g. Springfield \$2,650
 - h. Springfield \$ 200
 - i. TOTAL \$42,050
- xviii. Marty Nitka asked if that covered everything.
- xix. Herb Van Guilder said yes.
 - xx. Marty Nitka asked if the money is in the budget.
- xxi. Herb Van Guilder said between the carryover and budget, yes. He added that the Chair hope that the commissioners will give him leeway to work with the contractors to try to negotiate to spend less.
- xxii. Lou Gabranski said that if the total cost goes down, he has no objection.

- xxiii. Herb Van Guilder said that there is about \$75,000 to \$80,000 in funds, plus what they budgeted. He added that about 3 years ago at Town Meeting, there was an article to have all unused funds from the previous year to carry over to the next year in the Cemetery budget and not have it go to the town. He said that the commission lets the carryover monies accumulate and they use it for projects. He said the funds are in the Capital Reserve, Equipment and Building funds.
 - xxiv. Marty Nitka asked how much is in the Capital Fund.
 - xxv. Herb Van Guilder said from the 2012 report, about \$30,103. He said he would like a motion to accept these bids and give the Chair the prerogative to work with the contractors.
 - xxvi. **MOTION by Marty Nitka and seconded by Lou Gabranski to authorize the expenditure, not to exceed \$42,050 for paving, swale work and site work as outlined in the bids from Springfield Paving and M&M Construction. Motion passed unanimously.**
 - xxvii. Herbert VanGuilder asked who would work with the contractors.
- B. Review Bids for Filling of Pavement Cracks
- i. Herbert VanGuilder advised that this is for cracks on the other side. He said that Brett Sanderson was supposed to have gotten an estimate for this last fall. Herb Van Guilder said that he called Brett Sanderson to ask if he would have the bid for tonight. He recounted that at a meeting last fall, Brett Sanderson had received an estimate for a price per linear foot, but the board wanted a price for the all of the work.
 - ii. Lou Gabranski said the board does need a total figure.
 - iii. Marty Nitka said the board would not take action on this tonight.

6. New Business

- A. Discuss Employees and Benefits
- i. Lou Gabranski suggested going in to Executive Session.
 - ii. Herbert VanGuilder said he would like to give a quick update. He advised the board that the sexton would not be returning this year. He said that one employee opened up on Monday and the other may start next week, but wanted to discuss his salary.
 - iii. Marty Nitka asked if that employee could be sexton.
 - iv. Herb Van Guilder said not at this point. He said that both employees are great workers and groundskeepers, but would need more time and experience with paperwork, computer work and customer relations.
 - v. Marty Nitka asked if the staff members received benefits.
 - vi. Herb Van Guilder said sick time only.
 - vii. Marty Nitka asked what Herb Van Guilder would recommend.
 - viii. Nataile Gruber said that town employees get raises in July. She added that these two men did not received raises in July.
 - ix. There was a discussion regarding individual salaries and suggested increases.
 - x. **MOTION by Marty Nitka and seconded by Nataile Gruber to increase the salaries of the two staff members as discussed.**
 - xi. Herb Van Guilder asked if the increases would be retroactive to April 21, 2014.
 - xii. **Motion passed unanimously.**
 - xiii. Herb Van Guilder said they still need to get a 3rd person. He said that from mid-May through September they need 3 people to mow and trim. They need a sexton as soon as possible or they need to come up with a program to cover management of the cemetery. He has a job description for the sexton position that included being a working person

who mows, trims, meets with customers, sells lots, does paperwork and computer work. He suggested that the board consider making sexton a 10 month position. He suggested that the board form a committee of 2 or 3 to work on finding a sexton or coming up with an alternate management plan. He said that he has spoken with Frank Heald on possibilities using existing town employees and splitting the duties of the sexton. He said that Pam Cruickshank has put the opening for sexton on the website.

- xiv. Lou Gabranski asked if they would be advertising in the papers.
- xv. Marty Nitka said that no one reads the papers anymore. He suggested Craig's List, saying that it has more exposure.
- xvi. Herb Van Guilder agreed that putting ads in the papers was not fruitful.
- xvii. Marty Nitka said that he met with Frank Heald last week to discuss the history of the commission and policies. He recalled that at one time, the Cemetery budget was part of the town budget and the commissioners were in charge of cemetery policies. The employees worked for the town. He said that Frank Heald had said that if the commission wants to be part of the town budget process, it could be discussed.
- xviii. Lou Gabranski said that the Municipal Manager has nothing to do with the Cemetery Commission.
- xix. Herb Van Guilder said that he keeps the Municipal Manager up to speed as a courtesy. He added that at first, the reception was cool, but he gets a worm reception now and assistance.
- xx. Marty Nitka said that the Municipal Manager, years ago, assigned town employees to work at the cemetery.
- xxi. Herb Van Guilder said that is correct, but now, we have our own budget and employees.
- xxii. Marty Nitka said this board needs to figure out what we are going to do about staffing. He said that the town could vote to have the cemetery go back as a town department.
- xxiii. Herb Van Guilder said that years ago, the voters changed it because they were unhappy with the care the cemeteries received under the Select Board. He repeated his suggestion to form a committee to propose a plan for management of the cemetery.
- xxiv. Marty Nitka said that he thought they would need to find a sexton first.
- xxv. Herb Van Guilder said they need to do both. They need a sexton and also have the sexton train another staff member to fill in if needed.
- xxvi. Marty Nitka suggested making the formation of a committee be Plan B and be put on the agenda for a future meeting. He also suggested calling an Emergency meeting if and when they receive a few applications for the sexton position.
- xxvii. Herb Van Guilder said that most people want benefits now. He said he would check with the Municipal Manager about benefits packages, or the commission could purchase its own benefits packages. He asked the board how they plan to handle the cemetery business until they get a new sexton. He suggested that one of the commissioners do it.
- xxviii. Nataile Gruber suggested that one of the current staff members handle the work.
- xxix. Marty Nitka suggested Herb Van Guilder as acting sexton.
- xxx. Herb Van Guilder said no, but that he would make sure that the operations and management of the cemetery are going as efficiently as possible. He said that he and one of the staff cleaned out the office.
- xxxi. Marty Nitka said he would be grateful if Herb Van Guilder would oversee the operations, but would not be comfortable paying him.
- xxxii. Herb Van Guilder said that staff has been doing a good job getting started and he was given a list of things that need to be done or be purchased. Herb Van Guilder said that the chair can do these things, but he does not think it fair for the board to ask him to do it without compensation. He has put in about 20 hours of work on Cemetery work and

- business since the last meeting. They need equipment, equipment repairs and supplies. He said that he asked staff to take broken equipment to Chester for repairs. He asked who would be authorized to spend money and how much.
- xxxiii. Lou Gabranski said that if someone applies for the sexton position and is currently working, they would have to give two weeks' notice before they could start. He mentioned paying Herb Van Guilder about \$200 to handle the work outside normal commission work.
- xxxiv. Marty Nitka said it is the principle of the thing.
- xxxv. Lou Gabranski said that in the past, there were chairs who were paid for extra work.
- xxxvi. Herb Van Guilder said that this discussion is not accomplishing anything and he would talk to the Municipal Manager about cost-sharing employees.
- xxxvii. Marty Nitka said: a) we need to hire a sexton; b) we could go back to the town and be a department; or c) we could get rid of the Cemetery Commission and let the Select Board manage the cemeteries.
- xxxviii. Herb Van Guilder suggested making "c" above "d" and make "c" be cost share employees with the town.
- xxxix. Marty Nitka said that under his plan "b" above, they would use town employees and this board would make policy and decide what is needed and fees. He said he would like to first, hire a sexton who would be responsible to hire, make purchases, and come to meetings. He said that if this board cannot find a sexton, they should consider going to his plan b or c.
- xl. Herb Van Guilder said they would do their best to find a sexton. He asked what the board wants to do about day to day operations until they find a sexton.
- xli. Nataile Gruber said to ask current staff to handle it until we find a sexton. She said that the previous sexton had taught him a lot.
- xl.ii. Herb Van Guilder said that the phone in the office needs to be answered.
- xl.iii. Nataile Gruber said that a couple of years ago, the chair put in a bill for work and the town manager said that should not be done.
- xl.iiii. Lou Gabranski said that people should not go to the town manager; they should go to the chair first. People should work through the chair.
- xl.v. Marty Nitka asked if someone should make a motion about how much to pay Herb Van Guilder.
- xl.vi. Nataile Gruber said she wants the full board here for that vote.
- xl.vii. Marty Nitka asked if Herb Van Guilder can handle helping out until they find a new sexton or should that make one of the current staff acting sexton.
- xl.viii. Lou Gabranski asked about answering phones and scheduling funerals.
- xl.ix. Herb Van Guilder said he has already received calls from Adams and called them back. He added that he does to want to stay up there all day. He said that if people call the town offices, they contact him.
1. Lou Gabranski asked if staff could do the paperwork and computer work.
- li. Herb Van Guilder said that in addition to sexton, they need two people to dig gravesites. He said in the short term, he would do what he can. He added that if he is going to do this, he needs leeway to purchase items as needed.
- lii. Robert Brandt asked if the staff could handle the equipment and purchase small items and let Herb Van Guilder handle public relations.
- lii.iii. Herb Van Guilder said with leadership, staff could handle repairs and do tasks as assigned to him. He added that if the chair is to perform these duties, what amount the board would authorize for him to purchase needed equipment and supplies. He suggested a cap of \$2,000.

- liv. **MOTION by Lou Gabranski and seconded by Marty Nitka to authorize the Chair, Herb Van Guilder, to purchase items needed from the list supplied by staff not to exceed \$2,000.**
 - lv. Herb Van Guilder said that he would bring the list of items discussed at last year's meeting to be discussed at the next meeting.
 - lvi. **Motion passed unanimously.**
- B. Funeral Bill
- i. Nataile Gruber said that she still wants to continue discussions on the \$1,000 funeral bill. She said that she heard from the funeral director and he said that Herb Van Guilder set the rate. She said that she has an email saying that Herb Van Guilder set the rate and that other past funeral bills are all over the place.
 - ii. Marty Nitka said that maybe someone should make a motion to refund the family the difference between the \$1,000 and the published after-hours rates.
 - iii. Herbert VanGuilder said that they should put this on the agenda for the next meeting. He asked for a copy of the paperwork to which Nataile Gruber had referred.
 - iv. Nataile Gruber refused to provide a copy.
 - v. Herb Van Guilder said he would bring in a rate schedule to the next meeting.

7. Set Date for Next Meeting

- A. The next regular meeting will be on May 21, 2014 at 5:00 p.m.
- B. An emergency meeting would be called when and if there are applicants for the position of sexton.

8. Adjourn

- A. **MOTION by Marty Nitka and seconded by Lou Gabranski to adjourn this meeting. Motion passed unanimously.**
- B. Meeting adjourned at 7:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisha Klaiber

Herbert VanGuilder, Chairman

Marty Nitka

Lou Gabranski

Brett Sanderson

Natalie Gruber