

**TOWN OF LUDLOW
BOARD OF CEMETERY COMMISSIONERS**

REGULAR MEETING

Wednesday June 17, 2015

Board Members Present:

Herb VanGuilder
Lou Gabranski

Dave Harlow
Marty Nitka

Brett Sanderson

Others Present:

Doug Sheehan

Dan Cavoto

1. CALL TO ORDER

A. Meeting was called to order by Chairman Herb Van Guilder at 6:00 p.m. All present.

2. COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS

A. There were none.

3. APPROVE MINUTES

A. Herb Van Guilder advised that the minutes to be approved were from May 20, 2015.

B. **MOTION by Marty Nitka and seconded by Dave Harlow to approve the minutes of May 20, 2015 as presented. Motion passed unanimously.**

4. STAFF REPORTS

A. Inside Operations

- i. Herb Van Guilder said that Item #9 was about a complaint from a commissioner regarding chairs at internments. He said that this year has been bad with chairs. Herb Van Guilder said that the Commission bought the chairs and tent for the comfort of the people at the internments and added that he used to help put them up. He can only recall one upset chair in the past and that was an ADA problem and the chair went over backwards. He said that he is amazed that there has been so much trouble this year. He said that he investigated other undertakers and cemeteries and they have chairs. Brandon suggested putting out 12 to 15 chairs and putting the others in piles for anyone who needs them.
- ii. Doug Sheehan advised that they asked the people if they want chairs and if they don't, we don't put them out.
- iii. Marty Nitka asked when these recent problems occurred.
- iv. Doug Sheehan said at the Twitchell and Martin internments, also Donna Crossman went over at the Robee service.
- v. Herb Van Guilder said it is his experience that people are glad to have chairs. The set up needs to take effort and they should be set on even ground. He said that one

- man in a wheelchair had a hard time. He said that Doug Sheehan is talking about asking people at the worst time whether they want chairs.
- vi. Doug Sheehan said no other cemetery does it.
- vii. Herb Van Guilder said yes they do, adding that he has been to 53 other cemeteries.
- viii. Doug Sheehan said that funeral homes do it.
- ix. Herb Van Guilder said it is part of our feels.
- x. Brett Sanderson said that our fees have nothing to do with chairs and tents.
- xi. Marty Nitka said there is nothing wrong with doing what Doug Sheehan is doing, asking the people.
- xii. Herb Van Guilder said it is up to Dan Cavoto, he's the Outside Operations Manager.
- xiii. Dave Harlow said the Merrill service had chairs and he sees no problem with them.
- xiv. Herb Van Guilder said we need a policy on this.
- xv. Marty Nitka said having the chairs is a good thing and if Doug Sheehan calls and people want them, that's okay and if they don't, that's okay, too.
- xvi. Herb Van Guilder said it is professional to tend to those things and have them available.
- xvii. **MOTION by Marty Nitka and seconded by Brett Sanderson that chairs be available upon request from the family after the sexton makes the inquiry.**
- xviii. Lou Gabranski said he doesn't see how you would know how many chairs would be needed, when you don't know how many people will come. He suggested putting 6 chairs out and have the remaining chairs in a cart available for use.
- xix. Herb Van Guilder said it only takes a few minutes to put up a dozen. He said Brandon leaves a pile for the rest. He said that if staff sees a person who is having a problem, they should get the person a chair. He said there are many "gray panthers" in Ludlow. Why not have chairs and tents available. It's hot in August and we are staff is being paid.
- xx. Marty Nitka said yes, have chairs available.
- xxi. Lou Gabranski said at a recent Cavendish funeral, 4 chairs were put out and he used one. He thought it was nice and the tent also. He suggested putting out 4 to 6 chairs.
- xxii. Marty Nitka asked, even if the family doesn't want them?
- xxiii. Herb Van Guilder said there were a lot of people at the Twitchell service and one relative brought its own chair over for the widow. He said he was embarrassed that we didn't put out chairs. It only takes a few minutes.
- xxiv. **Marty Nitka called the question. Motion passed (Item #xvii), 3 for, one abstain and one no.**
- xxv. Herb Van Guilder said only 4 chairs.
- xxvi. Marty Nitka emphasized that was not the motion. The motion is that Doug Sheehan will call and ask the family if they want chairs.
- xxvii. Brett Sanderson said it always was the funeral homes' responsibility, not ours.
- xxviii. Lou Gabranski referred to Item #11 regarding the headstone on lot 203. The item states that the stone has been lying on the ground, broken for a while and staff was asked by family if we are going to fix it. Lou Gabranski asked who is responsible for fixing stones.
- xxix. Herb Van Guilder asked what Lou Gabranski suggests.
- xxx. Lou Gabranski said try to fix it, if possible, but if it costs anything, it is not our responsibility. He asked how it could be fixed.
- xxxi. Dan Cavoto said he had purchased a quart of 2-part epoxy for \$66.00, but is not sure it will take. He said it will take the entire quart to try to fix that one stone. He said it is quick set and you have to work fast with it.

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- xxxii. Marty Nitka asked, historically, who's responsibility has it been. He said, in reading the policy book, that it implies that the family is responsible.
- xxxiii. Herb Van Guilder said that since he has been on the board, we fix the stones and foundations, especially in the old sections.
- xxxiv. Marty Nitka asked what the answer to the question would be. Should we tell them it's their responsibility?
- xxxv. Herb Van Guilder said the consensus of the board is to tell the people it's their responsibility.
- xxxvi. Lou Gabranski said is that for stones and foundations.
- xxxvii. Marty Nitka said he was referring to the answer to lot 203.
- xxxviii. Lou Gabranski said that is the headstone.
- xxxix. Dan Cavoto said that some of the worst foundation repairs will require a crane to do and that is beyond our capabilities. It will cost us a lot.
- xl. Herb Van Guilder said if there is no foundation upkeep, the stones will come down. That's what's happening in the old section. Should staff fix them?
- xli. Marty Nitka said it should be on a case by case basis. He added that we don't need a policy that says we take care of all stones and foundations.
- xlii. Lou Gabranski referred to Item #12. Mark Tremblay has requested a letter of recommendation and explanation of why he was not rehired.
- xliii. There was a general discussion about this. Marty Nitka suggested that Herb Van Guilder write a letter including that he was a good employee and there was a change in staffing requirements.
- xliv. Herb Van Guilder said he would also add that we were disappointed that we were not able to rehire him.
- xlv. Herb Van Guilder referred to Item #13 that voices concerns from the Inside Operations Manager regarding Herb Van Guilder's interactions with staff. Herb Van Guilder said that he is appalled by the statement and to the best of his knowledge, he never, ever approached an employee about getting a haircut of having his beard cut and he doesn't know why that would be in the report at all. He said that the commissioners can ask the employee if they want.
- xlvi. Dan Cavoto said we had to report it. It is what we were told by staff.
- xlvii. Marty Nitka said the chair should communicate with the sexton or Outside Operations Manager about any concerns that he has, not the employees.
- xlviii. Herb Van Guilder said the chair is very upset and did not feel that he should have to apologize for a comment he did not make, but. Today, he did go and apologize to Dan Cavoto and the employee. He said that if he makes a comment to improve things, it is not meant to hurt someone. Constructive criticism should not be a problem. He has never had a problem before. He publicly apologized for any misconceptions that he made. He said that nothing personal was meant.
- xlix. Dave Harlow said that this squabble is not doing any good.
- l. Marty Nitka agreed.
- li. Herb Van Guilder referred to Item #14 and said that for the last 2 or 3 years, working with the past sexton, he was always told that there was no problem regarding dog poop. He told people to pick up the poop.
- lii. Marty Nitka said there is a policy, now, that no dogs are allowed. It is the policy, whether I agree or not.
- liii. Herb Van Guilder said there are bumps in the road with the new Inside/Outside Operations Managers. The job descriptions spell out their duties and Items 8, 10, 13 and 14 are the duties of the Outside Operations Manager. He said he still apologizes and feels bad that it was put in the Inside Operations Manager's report.

- liv. Lou Gabranski asked about Item # 6 regarding “six (7) foundations.”
- lv. Doug Sheehan said it should be 6.
- lvi. Lou Gabranski said that when we set up the weekly reports, he thought it was to tell what had been done, not these types of comments. It should be all business, not personalities.
- lvii. Herb Van Guilder said he tries to do the best he can and if anyone has a problem with me, I am available 24/8 to contact me. If I am wrong, I’ll let you know. The chair is supposed to have weekly meetings with the Outside manager, but Dan Cavoto has been really busy and I suggested biweekly.

B. Outside Operations

- i. Marty Nitka asked why we are trying to change work and stockpile areas into gravesites.
- ii. Dan Cavoto said that he was told to change it to a cremation area. We need a place to work.
- iii. Herb Van Guilder said that when we first hired him, I was instructed to take him around. I mentioned, what I call the back 40, in the conversation. I asked Dan Cavoto if maybe, in the future, we could designate it strictly for cremations. This is a difference of opinion. It is a nice area and it was an open discussion.
- iv. Marty Nitka said we should table this item.
- v. Herb Van Guilder said he would like to see it cleaned up and asked Dan Cavoto for suggestions.
- vi. Marty Nitka said there is no urgency here.
- vii. Dan Cavoto said it has boulders and a stockpile. He opened it up and did some tree cutting. Now, people can see what’s there. If we do clean it up, where do we put the stuff and it is close to the Okemo land.
- viii. Marty Nitka suggested they leave this until the board has a chance to see it.
- ix. Herb Van Guilder said a site review.
- x. Lou Gabranski asked about the tree line work.
- xi. Dan Cavoto said they left a buffer for coverage for the house. He said that Herb Van Guilder suggested trimming. Dan Cavoto said he made it pretty much equal heights.
- xii. Herb Van Guilder said that he thinks that he did not properly explain. There is a young man interested in cutting down dead trees. There is brush in the tree line that is growing into available lot space and the road.
- xiii. Marty Nitka said he does not know where they are talking about. He addressed Herb Van Guilder saying that he is going up there telling Dan Cavoto stuff to do. It should start here and we make those decisions, rather than you going up there first.
- xiv. Herb Van Guilder said it is only on the list of jobs to do. I was just showing Dan Cavoto around. It was not a directive, just a concern. At some point, we need to cut back and a citizen told me about the dead trees and said he would cut them and take them out.
- xv. Marty Nitka said that his comment is a general one.
- xvi. Lou Gabranski asked about the goals for the lower garage.
- xvii. Herb Van Guilder said this was another misunderstanding. It is rainy day work, just to clean the garages.
- xviii. Dan Cavoto said the bay is pretty much empty and would make a good workshop. He asked why it is empty. He said they moved all of the tools upstairs and it is all cluttered. It would make more sense to move it downstairs and make a workshop. He said he was asked to clean it out.

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- xix. Herb Van Guilder said they were doing most of the repairs up there.
 - xx. Dan Cavoto suggested the board do a site visit and he will show this to them. It makes more sense to use it as a shop.
 - xxi. Marty Nitka asked about Townline service of the backhoe.
 - xxii. Dan Cavoto said it had never been serviced.
 - xxiii. Marty Nitka asked the cost.
 - xxiv. Dan Cavoto said about \$1,500.
 - xxv. Lou Gabranski said we talked about that last year.
 - xxvi. Dan Cavoto said there is no record of it ever being done and the staff also can't recall it being done. It is better to have Townline do it.
 - xxvii. Herb Van Guilder said he agrees with Dan Cavoto.
 - xxviii. Dan Cavoto said the truck was just done.
 - xxix. Herb Van Guilder asked if Dan Cavoto is keeping records of service work on equipment.
 - xxx. Dan Cavoto said yes, he has folders upstairs.
 - xxxi. **MOTION by Brett Sanderson and seconded by Dave Harlow to authorize Dan Cavoto to proceed with service work at Townline on the backhoe. Motion passed unanimously.**
 - xxxii. Lou Gabranski said the curb stops are above ground and do we want them lowered.
 - xxxiii. Herb Van Guilder said Ludlow Electric put them in.
 - xxxiv. Marty Nitka asked what a curb stop is.
 - xxxv. Brett Sanderson said underground valve.
 - xxxvi. Dan Cavoto said some of them are 3-4 feet in the air. He is afraid someone will drive into them. They need to be at ground level.
 - xxxvii. Marty Nitka asked costs?
 - xxxviii. Brett Sanderson said you may be able to pull the 4 foot step up and not need new ones.
 - xxxix. Marty Nitka suggested Dan Cavoto go ahead and try it.
 - xl. Herb Van Guilder suggested they keep a map of the locations of the curb stops.
 - xli. Herb Van Guilder referred to the report about the flowers and said that Dan Cavoto misunderstood what he had said. He apologized to Dan Cavoto at the meeting.
 - xl.ii. Dan Cavoto said he was told by the town office to get the flowers at Home Depot.
 - xl.iii. Herb Van Guilder said they used to have a flower chairperson and they person told us to use red flowers. The Commissioners decided to let staff do the flowers. Staff decided to go with red and white and said it ties into Memorial Day. They were dark.
 - xl.ii. Dan Cavoto said they were red with white fillers. Some were supposed to be white, but turned out yellow.
 - xl.v. Herb Van Guilder said staff did take care of the flowers and tried to get away from the program.
 - xl.vi. Doug Sheehan said you can't get away from it because people paid for flowers forever.
 - xl.vii. Herb Van Guilder referred to the backside of the report and a diagram suggested by Dan Cavoto for a horseshoe fence by the dumpsite to beautify the area.
 - xl.viii. Dan Cavoto said it would be split rail, with stone and gravel and flowering trees, flowers and grass. He also suggested benches.
 - xl.ix. Herb Van Guilder asked the cost.
 - l. Dan Cavoto said trees are about \$70 each.
 - li. Herb Van Guilder asked Dan Cavoto to put together a rough estimate for the next meeting.

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- lii. Dan Cavoto said yes.
 - liii. Herb Van Guilder said he is concerned about the banks. They put in flowers to prevent erosion and it looks good. It did not make sense to leave large trees on the banks, small flowering trees are better. Lower shade trees are okay. It makes no sense to put in maples or pines.
 - liv. Dan Cavoto said it is slippery there and he was sliding while weed whacking. He will cut it if Herb Van Guilder wants.
 - lv. Herb Van Guilder said apple trees don't have the root problems that the bigger trees have and won't get as big. If we need to get rid of them, staff will be able to do it.
 - lvi. Dan Cavoto said the deer ate and destroyed all of the shrubs and asked for suggestions for what to put in.
 - lvii. Lou Gabranski suggested lilacs.
 - lviii. Dan Cavoto said they eat the evergreens.
 - lix. Herb Van Guilder said maybe Doug Sheehan can research on the computer or call UVM for deer resistant trees.
 - lx. Marty Nitka said he would like him to contact Tim Calabrese, a landscape architect about this.
 - lxi. Doug Sheehan asked if Heidi Bates had been paid for raking South Hill Cemetery.
 - lxii. Herb Van Guilder said we usually donate \$100 to her class.
 - lxiii. Marty Nitka said he thought we had voted on that.
 - lxiv. **MOTION by Marty Nitka and seconded by Brett Sanderson to donate \$100 to Heidi Bates' class for assisting at South Hill Cemetery. Motion passed unanimously.**
 - lxv. Marty Nitka asked how this gets communicated to the office.
 - lxvi. Herb Van Guilder said in the minutes.
 - lxvii. Dan Cavoto said that the quotes that he received from Countryside were much higher than expected. He said that he was able to repair the lock that people had been able to open with a credit card. He said that things have improved up there and he trusts staff. He said that the credit card entry was because the door was locked and staff needed to get into the room because the time clock is in there and they needed to sign out. He said that if they want to put locks on the three other doors it would be about \$75 each. He said they could also change the bathroom locks. Other quotes were for deadbolts - \$825; keyless entry - \$1100 and styleless , non-duplicate keys - \$1300. He said he can get double sided locks for the bathroom, at LaValleys for \$119.
 - lxviii. Herb Van Guilder asked Dan Cavoto if he is comfortable that the office can't be entered with a credit card and are all 3 doors credit card proof.
 - lxix. Dan Cavoto said comfortable.
 - lxx. Lou Gabranski asked about locks into the workshop.
 - lxxi. Dan Cavoto said not from the office. He then asked who would get copies of keys if we change the locks. Currently, he gives his set of keys to staff on weekends. He doesn't think they all need them.
 - lxxii. Doug Sheehan said the laptop is locking in the filing cabinet.
 - lxxiii. Dan Cavoto said if he did not trust them, he would not have them work weekends.
 - lxxiv. Lou Gabranski asked about equipment inventory.
 - lxxv. Dan Cavoto said the big ones are done. He replaced 2 broken rakes. He said he had thought we were missing more stuff, but things were kept in different places and have been located.
 - lxxvi. Board consensus to leave the locks as is.
 - lxxvii. Dan Cavoto asked if the board wants staff to have keys.

- lxxviii. Marty Nitka said it is up to Dan Cavoto to decide. You are the boss and can decide what's efficient and what works.
- lxxix. Lou Gabranski said to give them the keys when they need it, this way you know who's there.
- lxxx. Dan Cavoto said the generator would not turn on the cement mixer the last time he tried. Should he have it tested. It's an Arcticat and was purchased at Brown's. He said they used it last year.
- lxxxii. Brett Sanderson said go to Brown's or Central VT.
- lxxxiii. Lou Gabranski said he was up there a few days ago and the plywood covers look bad.
- lxxxiiii. Dan Cavoto said he did buy some new plywood and uses the old just for covers. He uses 3/4" at \$50/sheet for foundations.
- lxxxv. Herb Van Guilder suggested cutting different size pieces and painting them green, it would look better. Do it on rainy days.
- lxxxvi. Dan Cavoto said he keeps track of the budget and would make them a generic size.
- lxxxvii. Herb Van Guilder said that Doug Sheehan and Dan Cavoto are welcome to stay for the rest of the meeting.

NOTE: Due to time, Herb Van Guilder suggested board skip to Item 6, NEW BUSINESS, a. – Review and Update Policy Book

5. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Review and Project List & Prioritize by Commissioners
 - i. Next Meeting
- B. Review Budget
 - i. Next Meeting

6. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Review and Update Policy Book
 - i. Marty Nitka said they probably would not get through it in one night. He said that in 2009, Pam Cruickshank prepared a list of policies that were in effect at the time. It is basically the same as our 1987 Policy booklet. We have added policies to it that have been adopted in the last 2 years and incorporated them into the draft. Policies that have been added are"
 - a. page 3, Service work in cemetery, adopted 5/21/2014
 - b. page 4, No Hunting, adopted 9/17/14
 - c. page 4, 50% discount to veterans, adopted 5/21/14
 - d. page 4, No green burials, adopted 11/21/13
 - ii. Herb Van Guilder said that a green burial is one where someone just puts the body in the ground anywhere they want.
 - iii. **MOTION by Dave Harlow and seconded by Brett Sanderson that "except for Military Honors" be added to the policy regarding No Hunting. Motion passed unanimously.**

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- iv. Lou Gabranski suggested that honorably discharged be added to Veteran's discounts.
 - v. Herb Van Guilder said if someone is not honorably discharged, they are not considered a veteran.
 - vi. Marty Nitka said if you don't want to end up giving the discount to dishonorably discharged persons, you should include it.
 - vii. **MOTION by Lou Gabranski and seconded by Dave Harlow that Honorably Discharged be added to the policy about veteran discounts.**
 - viii. Herb Van Guilder said that he has gone through the draft 2 or 3 times and there are some verbiage issues. He said that all places that say sexton, should either say Inside Operations Manager or Outside Operations Manager.
 - ix. Marty Nitka said that he will go through the draft and make changes.
 - x. Herb Van Guilder said in the 1993 version, there was wording in the Plants and Herbage section. He said that someone wanted to plant a tree in memory of their son. Someone planted lilies and tulips on her daughter's grave. We have spots where it would be nice to have a tree planted in memory of someone. Lilies and tulips are only there in the spring.
 - xi. Marty Nitka asked who or what would determine, tulip or tree and where.
 - xii. Dave Harlow said no planting. If you add by permission of the commissioners, you are opening a can of worms. Who decides?
 - xiii. Herb Van Guilder asked about traffic on page 3, specifically "on grassed roads" being forbidden. He said that for large funerals, they should use the grassed roads.
 - xiv. **MOTION by Marty Nitka and seconded by Brett Sanderson to remove that policy line from the draft. Motion passed unanimously.**
 - xv. Herb Van Guilder asked about Cemetery closed to all vehicles at dusk, saying that the 1993 version says 8:00 p.m.
 - xvi. General consensus to leave it at Dusk.
 - xvii. Marty Nitka asked about animals being prohibited.
 - xviii. Herb Van Guilder said several people walk or hike with pets and there are no problems.
 - xix. Dave Harlow asked if they pick up after them.
 - xx. Herb Van Guilder said yes. He said that last year, there were no problems with people with dogs.
 - xxi. **MOTION by Herb Van Guilder and seconded by Lou Gabranski to change policy to read: "All pets shall be under the control of the person that the pet is with and that person shall be responsible for the removal of all pet waste."**
 - xxii. Herb Van Guilder said lots of pet owners take their pets with them all over and people walk in the cemetery. It helps keep vandalism down and the staff doesn't have a problem. Sometimes there is poop, but there is more of problem with deer, geese and fox poop.
 - xxiii. **Motion passed unanimously.**
 - xxiv. Herb Van Guilder referred to the policy about picnics and said that people come to sit in the cemetery for lunch. He would like to see the policy revised to be more flexible.
 - xxv. Marty Nitka will rework the policy.

B. Review Excavation Policy

- i. Next Meeting

C. Other Business

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- i. Marty Nitka asked about an invoice included in the warrants, noting that the invoice price and the warrant amount were different. The invoice is for \$573.54 and warrant amount is for \$403.26.
 - ii. Brett Sanderson explained that the invoice was for the entire town and the warrant indicated the amount charged to the Cemetery Commission.

7. SET DATE FOR NEXT MEETING

- A. Herb Van Guilder advised that the next regular meeting will be on July 15, 2015 at 5:30 p.m. He said that the chair may not be here.

8. ADJOURN

- A. **MOTION by Brett Sanderson and seconded by Lou Gabranski to adjourn this meeting. Motion passed unanimously.**
- B. Meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisha Klaiber

Herbert VanGuilder, Chairman

Marty Nitka

Lou Gabranski

Brett Sanderson

Dave Harlow