

**TOWN OF LUDLOW
BOARD OF CEMETERY COMMISSIONERS**

**REGULAR MEETING
HOWARD BARTON, JR. CONFERENCE ROOM**

Wednesday, April 24, 2024

Board Members Present:

Bob Brandt	Lou Gabranski
Shannon Barton	Bruce Schmidt

Staff Present:

Brendan McNamara	Doug Sheehan
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Others Present:

Scott Baitz	Alan Couch
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1. Call to Order

- A. Brendan McNamara called the meeting at 5:01. He asked for a moment of silence in honor of Herb VanGuilder, who passed recently.

2. Annual Board Re-Organization

- A. Elect Chair of the Board - **Motion by Bruce Schmidt and seconded by Louie Gabranski to elect Bob Brandt as Chair of the Board. Motion passed unanimously.**
- B. Elect Vice Chair of the Board – **Motion by Louie Gabranski and seconded by Shannon Stark to elect Bruce Schmidt as Vice Chair of the Board. Motion passed unanimously.**
- C. Elect Clerk of the Board – **Motion by Bruce Schmidt and seconded by Louie Gabranski to elect Shannon Stark as Clerk of the Board. Motion passed unanimously.**
- D. Elect Signer of Deeds – **Motion by Bruce Schmidt and seconded by Shannon Stark to elect Bob Brandt as signer of deeds. Motion passed unanimously.**
- E. Appoint Lisha Klaiber as Recording Clerk. **Motion by Shannon Stark and seconded by Bruce Schmidt to appoint Lisha Klaiber as Recording Clerk. Motion passed unanimously.**
- F. Set Day and Time of Regular Meetings and Alternate Meetings.
 - i. Shannon Stark asked if it would be possible to change the day of the week. She can do any other day other than Thursday.
 - ii. Brendan McNamara said that may conflict with other boards.
 - iii. Shannon Stark said that she will make it work.
 - iv. Bruce Schmidt asked the board to consider if there is really enough business that we need to meet every month? He suggested possibly every other month, year- round. Would that impact business? He said that the board gives directions to staff. He asked if staff would be able to provide updates each month.
 - v. Brendan McNamara said that could be done.
 - vi. Bob Brandt said that if needed, we can always call special meetings. He said during the winter, we can put together a list of things to be done the following season and get the RFPs out over the winter for summer projects.
 - vii. Bruce Schmidt said in the past, we had 6 meetings per year. We can still do that, but with some in the winter.

- viii. Brendan McNamara said that the board can meet every other month and be able to get our “ducks in a row” for the next season. This may be beneficial.
 - ix. Louie Gabranski asked when the cemetery will open this year. He said he didn’t know there was a problem with the road.
 - x. **MOTION by Bruce Schmidt and seconded by Shannon Stark to hold regular meetings at 5:00 p.m. on the Third Wednesday of the month, alternating months year- round with other meetings as needed at the discretion of the board.**
 - xi. Bruce Schmidt asked Brendan McNamara that on non-meeting months, to have the Sexton’s and Buildings and Grounds reports sent to members by email or regular mail.
 - xii. Brendan McNamara said he will do that.
 - xiii. Bob Brandt said that the board will still meet in May.
 - xiv. Bruce Schmidt said that it is important that we fulfill our obligations to the voters and still meet 6 times per year.
 - xv. **MOTION passed unanimously.**
 - G. Designate Newspaper of General Circulation
 - i. **MOTION by Bruce Schmidt and seconded by Shannon Stark to retain THE VERMONT JOURNAL as the newspaper of general circulation with THE RUTLAND HERALD as backup. Motion passed unanimously.**
 - H. Adopt Roberts Rules Order
 - i. **Motion by Bruce Schmidt and seconded by Louie Gabranski to continue using Roberts Rules of Order. Motion passed unanimously.**
3. **Consideration of Changes, Additions or Removal to the Agenda**
- A. Brendan McNamara said that no changes are necessary.
4. **Comments from Citizens**
- A. There were none.
5. **Review and Possibly Fill Vacant Commissioner’s Seat**
- A. Bob Brandt said that letters of interest have been received from Alan Couch, Scott Baitz and Rose Goings to fill the seat held by Herb VanGuilder. He said that the person will fill the position until the next Town Meeting in 2025.
 - B. Doug Sheehan said that Mr. VanGuilder’s term would have expired in 2027.
 - C. Alan Couch said that the DRB had done that, filling the position for the balance of the Town year and by last year, all of the positions expired at the same time. They had to stagger terms for this year in order and then as each of these new appointments expired, they could be reappointed for a 5- year term. He said that this could happen to this board if they don’t appoint through the end of Mr. VanGuilder’s term.
 - D. Bob Brandt explained that the commissioners are elected. The person can run again in at the next Town meeting.
 - E. Bruce Schmidt suggested that the board vote by paper ballots. He also suggested that Scott Baitz and Alan Couch be given the opportunity to talk to the board about their reasons for applying for this position.
 - F. There was consensus to have paper ballots and giving them an opportunity to speak.

- G. Scott Baitz said that his family, the Hazen's have been here since the 1850's – they have 4 generations here. He was going to run, when he thought one of the current members was not going to stay on, but the person did.
- H. Alan Couch said that he had been appointed to fill a 1-year position on the DRB, but someone with more experience on the DRB was appointed. We weren't given the opportunity to talk there. There is always a VENN of people in town who are willing to fill the positions. He was on the Planning Commissions for several years and would like to continue to be part of town government and to voice his opinions. It dilutes the "gene pool" when only the same people are on the boards. He would like to stay involved.
- I. Bruce Schmidt asked both what they see as positives and challenges for the Commission.
- J. Scott Baitz said this is the first Cemetery Commission meeting that he has attended. The Cemetery is beautiful and he wants to keep it that way. He does not know about challenges they have because whatever challenges they have had, they have handled and the Cemetery is the way it should be.
- K. Alan Couch said that the crew is conscientious and the Cemetery is immaculate. As far as ideas, is it possible to put 2 burials in one plot at different levels? How many cremains are allowed?
- L. Doug Sheehan said that they may have one full burial per plot and one cremain or 2 cremains. He said that we require a vault or cement. We don't allow green burials.
- M. Bruce Schmidt asked if we should consider a portion of the new section for green burials.
- N. Bob Brandt explained that a green burial does not have a casket, vault and the person is buried in a shroud and only to 3 feet deep.
- O. Louie Gabranski asked about spreading of ashes.
- P. Doug Sheehan said it is not allowed, but hard to stop.
- Q. Scott Baitz asked about people not picking up after their dogs. They can take the dogs to West Hill and we will have a dog park again.
- R. Shannon Stark said that there is also a place for dogs at the golf course. She asked about Rose Goings.
- S. Brendan McNamara said she is not here.
- T. Brendan McNamara distributed papers for ballots and then collected. The vote was 3 for Scott Baitz and 1 for Alan Couch.
- U. **MOTION by Bruce Schmidt and seconded by Shannon Stark to appoint Scott Baitz to fill the open position for one year, until the next Town Meeting. Motion passed unanimously.**
 - i. Scott Baitz joined the board.

6. Sexton's Report

- A. Doug Sheehan said they now have 27 cremations scheduled. And the first burial will be around May 8th.
- B. Bob Brandt said that he had spoken to Mike O'Neil (M&M) and they will start working on the road tomorrow. The drain pipe had to be replaced all the way down the driveway.
- C. Doug Sheehan said the road is dug up to the tomb.
- D. Brendan McNamara said they have replaced the old pipe with an 18" one. The old pipe was clay. He said that if the weather holds, it should be completed next week and Springfield paving will pave when safe.
- E. Bruce Schmidt said that the Cemetery has not been given priority in the past and it should have been. Make this a priority and get the cemetery open.
- F. Brendan McNamara said last year it was open whenever possible. In October/November the road was dug up and the pavement.

- G. Bob Brandt agreed with Bruce Schmidt about making this a priority. He said you can't drive on that road.
- H. Brendan McNamara said he thought that it might have been possible to come in the other way, but Kevin MacPherson explained why that was not a good idea.
- I. Louie Gabranski said there was a tree down.
- J. Brendan McNamara said they are working on it and it will be finished tomorrow.
- K. Louie Gabranski asked about the fence?
- L. Shannon Stark asked at the end of last year, when the weather was okay, did we reopen?
- M. Brendan McNamara said after the flood, in November when the snow melted, we did open a couple of times and plowed, but then the plow was doing more damage and the road became a safety hazard. Kevin MacPherson kept it open as much as possible. He said that they had quotes to replace the wood split rail fence with a chain link for about \$4,620. Do we want to discuss spending some of the reserves?
- N. Louie Gabranski said that Herb VanGuilder had said to take the fence down.
- O. Brendan McNamara said that wood would require constant maintenance and repair. This is by the gate.
- P. Doug Sheehan asked about the lower gate.
- Q. Bruce Schmidt said by the pond, he would do wood, it looks better.
- R. Shannon Stark suggested continuing with the chain link that we discussed last year.
- S. Brendan McNamara said he will ask Kevin to get some updated costs.
- T. Bruce Schmidt said it is the Town Manager's responsibility to make sure the Cemetery gets priority.
- U. Doug Sheehan said that Kevin wants to get on the fence company's list as soon as possible.
- V. Shannon Stark said we were also going to add another garbage can or two and add signs about dog rules.
- W. Brendan McNamara said that has not been done, yet.
- X. Bruce Schmidt said we need to have a list of projects that need to be done.
- Y. Brendan McNamara said he looks for direction. One piece is the signs. We had a quote last season, for a 3' x 4' sign for about \$700. Do we need a vote, or do I make the decision. This is different from the fence – more operational.
- Z. Shannon Stark suggested we set a limit.
- AA. Brendan McNamara said that other boards have a limit of \$5,000.
- BB. Bob Brandt said this board voted on the sign last year, but we didn't have a price.
- CC. Bruce Schmidt said that if we do not allow the town manager to have some discretion, things will fall through the cracks. He suggested \$2,000. He added that the board did vote to approve the signs.
- DD. Brendan McNamara said that if an item is controversial or polarizing, he will bring it to the board.
- EE. Bruce Schmidt asked if the board has a consensus on \$3,000.
- FF. Louie Gabranski said that would be the max.
- GG. The board came to a consensus to approve the Town Manager to have discretion on purchases up to \$3,000.

7. Buildings & Grounds Report

- A. There were no specific comments on the Buildings and Grounds report.

8. Opening for the Season

- A. This was discussed in the comments about waiting for the road to be reopened.

9. Seasonal Goals

- A. Bruce Schmidt suggested asking the sexton to review and consider possibly changing some of the cemetery rules. This will take some time. We need to make the public aware about some of the questions such as green burials. He said the mausoleum issue is cleared up.
- B. Brendan McNamara said that he checks in daily with Doug Sheehan.
- C. Bruce Schmidt said to make bullet points of possible changes.
- D. Doug Sheehan suggested a separate section for green burials. He said there are people in Vermont who want this and can't find it.
- E. Brendan McNamara said they will look at possible locations.
- F. Bob Brandt said they do not always have grave markers.
- G. Doug Sheehan said they would still have corner stones.
- H. Bruce Schmidt asked buying lots for them
- I. Doug Sheehan said it would be in a certain section of the cemetery. He said there is a rule in the regulations requiring cement vaults.
- J. Bruce Schmidt asked, due to the cost to the purchaser, is that necessary?
- K. Doug Sheehan said the cost is about \$1,100 and up for a cement vault. He added that most people have metal caskets.
- L. Bob Brandt asked Doug Sheehan to bring some suggestions to next month's meeting.

10. Directory Update

- A. Bob Brandt said that it is working well, but many people still do not know about it.
- B. Bruce Schmidt said they should ask Brendan McNamara how they can make more people aware of the directory. He asked about a QR code.

11. New Business

- A. Town Manager Updates
 - i. Brendan McNamara said it is already generated and the QR code is on the sign.
 - ii. Bruce Schmidt said we need to show people how to use it.
 - iii. Brendan McNamara said that he can go on Okemo Valley TV and explain the usage. He said that Patrick Cody can probably show the screen behind them.
 - iv. Town Website
 - a) Brendan McNamara said Diane Knight and Tori Blanchard are working on the website and how to launch it by September 1st. Each department will have its own page.
 - v. Cemetery Signs
 - a) Shannon Stark asked when the signs will be put up.
 - b) Brendan McNamara said he has a quote and it takes about 2 to 3 weeks after the order is placed. He said that one of them will be put in the wood frame that they took from the Little League Park. That one will be at the entrance. The other will be located further up the road.

12. Other Business

- A. Recognition of Herb VanGuilder
 - i. Bruce Schmidt suggested that they should do something at the Cemetery to recognize Herb VanGuilder. Maybe renaming part of a road. We need to come up with something by mid-summer.

- ii. Doug Sheehan said his burial is scheduled for June 8th.
- B. Road Repair
 - i. Louie Gabranski asked who pays for the road repair.
 - ii. Brendan McNamara said the town and FEMA – 75%/25% (FEMA/Town) He said we may be able to push it to 90/10.

13. **Set Date for Next Meeting**

- A. Next regular meeting - Wednesday, May 15, 2024 at 5:00 p.m.

14. **Sign Warrant Orders**

- A. The warrant orders have been signed.

15. **Possible Executive Session/Personnel/Contracts/Legal Issues**

- A. Brendan McNamara said an Executive Session is not needed.

16. **Adjourn**

- A. **MOTION by Bruce Schmidt and seconded Shannon Stark to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously.**
- B. Meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisha Klaiber

Bob Brandt, Chairman

Bruce Schmidt

Scott Baitz

Shannon Stark

Louie Gabranski