

**TOWN OF LUDLOW  
BOARD OF CEMETERY COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR MEETING  
HOWARD BARTON, JR. CONFERENCE ROOM**

**Wednesday, October 18, 2023**

**Board Members Present:**

Bob Brandt	Bruce Schmidt	Herb Van Guilder
Lou Gabranski	Shannon Stark	

**Board Members Absent:**

Herb Van Guilder

**Staff Present:**

Brendan McNamara	Doug Sheehan
------------------	--------------

**1. Call to Order**

A. Bob Brandt called the meeting at 5:04.

**2. Consideration of Changes, Additions or Removal to the Agenda**

A. Brendan McNamara said that no changes are necessary.

**3. Comments from Citizens**

A. There were none.

**4. Approve Minutes of Previous Meeting**

A. Bob Brandt said that the minutes to be reviewed are from September 20, 2023.

**B. Motion by Bruce Schmidt and seconded by Shannon Stark to accept the minutes from September 20, 2023 as submitted. Motion passed unanimously.**

**5. Sexton's Report**

A. Bob Brandt advised that Doug Sheehan is still having a problem with people not leashing their dogs, even urinating on monuments. He would like to be able to tell them to leash the dogs or leave the cemetery.

B. There was a unanimous consensus to approve the request to authorize Doug Sheehan to tell people to leash their dogs or leave the cemetery.

C. Consensus to accept the Sexton's Report for September as submitted

**6. Buildings & Grounds Report**

- A. Bruce Schmidt asked how the concrete pour went.
- B. Brendan McNamara said very well.
- C. Consensus to accept the Buildings and Grounds Report for September as submitted.

**7. End of Season Schedule/ 2024 Outlook**

**A. SEASON CLOSING**

- i. Brendan McNamara noted that in the past, the cemetery had closed after Veterans' Day. He suggested that the cemetery remain open as long as weather permits. He said that staff will be dialing back on maintenance.
- ii. Bob Brandt said it should be left open until the snow.
- iii. Louie Gabranski added and when you can't drive up.
- iv. Bruce Schmidt said the cemetery should be open whenever possible. He agreed that in the bad weather the road is bad. He said that there are people who visit the cemetery every day and the cemetery should be open whenever possible, weather permitting.
- v. Brendan McNamara said that he agrees. He said there are people who would park at the bottom and snowshoe up.
- vi. Bruce Schmidt said this information needs to get to the staff and the police department.
- vii. Doug Sheehan said that during the week, Kevin MacPherson opens and closes the gate and on weekends, the police department does it.
- viii. Shannon Stark agreed that it should be open weather permitting.
- ix. Bruce Schmidt said it does have to get to staff and the police – open whenever possible, weather permitting.
- x. Shannon Stark asked who has keys to the gate.
- xi. Doug Sheehan said the employees, the police, Kevin MacPherson and himself. He asked about burials.
- xii. Bruce Schmidt said if it is possible, it is okay.
- xiii. Brendan McNamara said it would be decided on a case -by -case basis, depending on if the ground is frozen and if they can dig.
- xiv. Doug Sheehan said at one time it was immediate family and the hearse.
- xv. Bruce Schmidt said it depends on the weather and the road.
- xvi. Doug Sheehan said with one family, they had to plow the road.
- xvii. Bruce Schmidt said this is so emotional; we need to make it easier, if possible.
- xviii. Doug Sheehan said in the past, he had to ask the commissioners if it was okay to bury someone in the winter.
- xix. Brendan McNamara said if it is a case- by- case basis, if it is doable, we can do it.
- xx. Louie Gabranski said if we do it for one, we should do it for all.
- xxi. Brendan McNamara said that is true, if the conditions at the time allow it.
- xxii. Bruce Schmidt said we shouldn't be plowing the road. The plow could push the snow into and damage the monuments.
- xxiii. Doug Sheehan said the plow could also dig up the ground.
- xxiv. Shannon Stark said the sign says, weather permitting.
- xxv. Doug Sheehan said there is always a problem at the top of the hill in bad weather.

B. 2024 OUTLOOK

- i. Brendan McNamara said that fencing, signage and paving are on the list. He said that he will have a full list to present to the board at the November meeting and they can discuss priority. He said that he and Kevin MacPherson will make their recommendations as to what they feel is the priority and present the top 5 or 6 projects on their list.

8. **Financial Update**

- A. Brendan McNamara said that Capital was \$49,751 over last year that included labor, legal fees, and project and monument restoration. Labor was \$28,250 last year but increased to \$49,700. Now the Sexton is \$18,000 and it is currently in line. He said that the \$11,000 will go back into the Cemetery from the town. He said that Tree Removal was \$20,493, monument restoration was \$11,611. These were unforeseen expenses and they depleted the general fund. We are bouncing back. We corrected the budget going into this year. He said they will start the FY2025 Budget process at the November meeting.
- B. Bruce Schmidt asked who managed the labor. How did we allow it to go over by so much? Who is responsible to watch and keep track of this? We were over by \$21,000 for Grounds. We went from \$28,000 to \$49,000.
- C. Doug Sheehan said that they added a person last year.
- D. Brendan McNamara said that he has a pulse on the cemetery and is tracking the numbers. He said that Kevin MacPherson keeps track of his crew. He said that Department Heads control their budgets and he goes over the numbers with them weekly.
- E. Bruce Schmidt noted that Improvement Projects were \$14,000 over and asked who decided on that.
- F. Brendan McNamara said that he does have a grip on it now. He agreed that to go over by \$20,000 in Labor is a lot.
- G. Doug Sheehan said that last year, his salary was included under General Labor.
- H. Louie Gabranski asked when the employees come back.
- I. Doug Sheehan said in April or as soon as possible. He said that they stop after they take down the Veterans' Day flags.
- J. Brendan McNamara said he is looking into Labor with Kevin MacPherson. He said that they decide when people are needed, depending on the weather.
- K. Shannon Stark asked if the Legal fees were about the ROW.
- L. Brendan McNamara said yes and the fees will go on as the case is still in the court.
- M. Bruce Schmidt said that moving forward, we need to get a handle on the budget and check on the labor costs. He asked Brendan McNamara to explain taking money out of the General Fund.
- N. Brendan McNamara said they were running a \$40,000 deficit.
- O. Bruce Schmidt said the deficit would show in the audit. How does the Cemetery get money to cover the deficit...does it borrow money. He said the Town can borrow money and asked what the plan is for the cemetery. He noted that the cemetery is a separate entity.
- P. Brendan McNamara said there are a few options and the cemetery can borrow money. He said that Ulla Cook can explain the options a consensus on how to cover the deficit. We have been running a deficit since the end of June. He said there was a problem once,

when the town pulled \$25,000 from the cemetery. He said at that time, the cemetery had a surplus.

- Q. Bob Brandt said if the cemetery has a surplus, does the money get rolled over into an account.
- R. Brendan McNamara said that is what Ulla Cook explained.
- S. Bruce Schmidt said that from one year to the next, you can encumber funds by a vote. The town does it with the Capital money and we can do it with the cemetery. He suggested that maybe, Ulla Cook did not show that account with these numbers.
- T. Brendan McNamara said the encumbered funds are about \$100,000 and that they took \$50,000 to offset the deficit. He said that fund is now at \$50,000. He said he will check on this for the next meeting.
- U. Bruce Schmidt said that Tree Removal at \$20,000 can be done under Capital, same as the monument restoration. He said that decisions have to be made. He said he would like to receive monthly financial statements in the packet each month, with year to date numbers. He likes to see the trends.

9. **New Business**

- A. Herb Van Guilder
  - i. Bruce Schmidt suggested that the commission send Herb Van Guilder flowers.
  - ii. There was total consensus from the commissioners.
- B. FEMA
  - i. Shannon Stark asked how things are going with FEMA.
  - ii. Brendan McNamara said it is an ongoing process. He said that every event that has damage has to be inventoried. He said that the closing date for the town and village is October 28, 2023 and then the inventory becomes projects.

10. **Other Business**

- A. None

11. **Set Date for Next Meeting**

- A. Next regular meeting - Wednesday, November 15, 2023 at 5:00 p.m.

12. **Sign Warrant Orders**

- A. The warrant orders have been signed.

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

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

14. **Adjourn**

- A. **MOTION by Bruce Schmidt and seconded by Shannon Stark to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously.**
- B. Meeting adjourned at 5:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lisha Klaiber

\_\_\_\_\_  
Bob Brandt, Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Bruce Schmidt

\_\_\_\_\_  
Louie Gabranski

\_\_\_\_\_  
Herb Van Guilder

\_\_\_\_\_  
Shannon Stark