

**TOWN OF LUDLOW  
BOARD OF CEMETERY COMMISSION**

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

**Wednesday, May 17, 2017**

**Board Members Present:**

Herbert VanGuilder                      Brett Sanderson  
Louie Gabranski                         Marty Nitka

**Board Members Absent:**

David Harlow

**Staff Present:**

Frank Heald

**1. Call to Order**

- A. The Cemetery Commission Meeting was called to order by Chair, Herbert VanGuilder at 4:00 PM.

**2. Cemetery Re-Organization**

- A. Elect Chair of the Board:  
MOTION by Marty Nitka and seconded by Louie Gabranski to elect Herbert VanGuilder as Chair of the Board. All in favor and the motion passed.
- B. Elect Vice Chair:  
MOTION by Marty Nitka and seconded by Louie Gabranski to elect Brett Sanderson as Vice Chair of the Board. All in favor and the motion passed.
- C. Elect Clerk of the Board:  
MOTION by Louie Gabranski and seconded by Brett Sanderson to elect Marty Nitka as Clerk of the Board. All in favor and the motion passed.
- D. Elect Signer of Deeds:  
MOTION by Marty Nitka and seconded by Brett Sanderson to elect Herbert VanGuilder as the Signer of Deeds and the Vice Chair to sign in the Chair's absence. All in favor and the motion passed.
- E. Appoint Recording Secretary:  
MOTION by Marty Nitka and seconded by Brett Sanderson to appoint Lisha Klaiber as the Recording Secretary.
- F. Set Time & Date of the Meeting:

Motion by Marty Nitka and seconded by Brett Sanderson to set the time and date of the Cemetery Commission meeting for the third Wednesday of the month at 4:00 PM, with alternate meetings per request. All in favor and the motion passed.

G. Designate Newspaper of Record:

MOTION by Marty Nitka and seconded by Brett Sanderson to designate the Vermont Journal as the newspaper of record. All in favor and the motion passed.

H. Adopt Roberts Rules of Order:

MOTION by Brett Sanderson and seconded by Louie Gabranski to adopt Roberts Rules of Order. All in favor at the motion passed.

**3. Approve Minutes of Previous Meeting (s).**

A. MOTION by Brett Sanderson and seconded by Lou Gabranski to approve the minutes from December 21, 2016 as presented. All in favor and the motion passed.

**4. Comments from Citizens:**

A. None present.

**4. New Business:**

A. Louie Gabranski mentioned that he had seen new flowers sitting outside the building but did not see anyone at the Cemetery. He wondered who brought the flowers and why they were not inside.

B. Frank Heald said the cemetery staff will take care of bringing the flowers inside. He said that things happen at the Cemetery that are automatic. He said he has a great deal of trust in Doug Sheehan, John Grassi and Kevin and thought Doug may have ordered the flowers. They will be sure that everything is secured.

C. Louie Gabranski said he just wanted to be sure the flowers weren't stolen.

D. Herbert VanGuilder asked who the Commissioners should ask when they have questions.

E. Frank Heald said he will answer, but it is more difficult late in the afternoon when he may not have any answers for the Commissioners.

F. Louie Gabranski asked what happened to the Cemetery gate.

G. Frank Heald said the gate is removed in the winter for snowplowing. He said the pole was slightly out of vertical, but the gate still opens and the pole will be repaired.

H. Herbert VanGuilder asked who took down the picket fence.

I. Frank Heald said the fence and fence posts were rotten so they were removed. He added that the fence will be replaced.

J. Herb Van Guilder asked the Cemetery Commissioners if they wouldn't mind if he took the picket fence that was removed. Commissioners said it was ok to do.

**5. Other Business:**

A. Frank Heald said that the Vermont State Statutes requires that *"A Sexton or other person having the care of a cemetery, tomb or receiving vault shall not receive or permit the burial or entombment of a dead body, or the remains thereof, in the cemetery or tomb of which he or she has charge, or the removal of a body therefrom,*

*until there is delivered to him or her a certificate of permission issued in accordance with the provisions of this chapter.”*

- B. Frank Heald said he has re-written the job description for Cemetery Sexton or Interim Sexton. He explained that the law says you should have a Sexton or Interim Sexton to satisfy the law.
- C. Louie Gabranski asked if they have a Sexton, shouldn't we hire someone who will be there continuously.
- D. Frank Heald said no.
- E. Louie Gabranski asked what has happened to all of our projects we had listed to do. He said nothing was done last year.
- F. Frank Heald said that was because the Commission didn't bring him on until September.
- G. Brett Sanderson said the Cemetery was also short-staffed at the cemetery last year.
- H. Frank Heald said the Commission will make progress this summer.
- I. Louie Gabranski asked if Kevin MacPherson was in charge.
- J. Frank Heald said no, and reminded the Commission that his proposal for management was to operate under the Municipal Manager, which is what everything in the town does. Frank said from time to time he will designate various people to assign various tasks.
- K. Frank Heald explained that Kevin MacPherson is the Building & Grounds Foreman and is responsible for much in any given day. He said he meets with Kevin every morning and if they need something of a more serious nature, such as digging a grave, they will bring in a skilled operator to dig the grave. He explained that everything else will function with 1-2 staff members and more staff on other occasions to get the job done.
- L. Frank Heald said in our case, when you see people performing a function it is because they were assigned to do a task.
- M. Frank Heald said that John Grassi is our consistent staff member. Frank said if a Commissioner has a question, they can call me anytime.
- N. Louie Gabranski asked if the Cemetery Commissioners should be talking with Frank or Kevin.
- O. Brett Sanderson said the Commissioners should go to Frank for everything.
- P. Frank Heald explained that all elected officials can contact him directly anytime during the day. He noted that he is also here occasionally on Saturday and Sunday and the Commissioners also have his home phone number.
- Q. Marty Nitka asked if Frank Heald was suggesting Doug Sheehan be the Sexton and not Frank.
- R. Frank Heald said yes and there is a reason for that. He explained that Doug Sheehan has spent the winter on a part-time basis inputting all of the old cemetery records into an electronic database that will ultimately be available for the public to access. Frank said they program is a part of the NEMRC system and there was no cost for the software. Frank said he believes Doug may be finished with the lower cemetery and that the upper cemetery will take more time.
- S. Marty Nitka asked if Doug Sheehan reports to Frank Heald.
- T. Frank Heald said yes. He said he talks with Doug every morning and added that Doug monitors the cemetery phone and once the weather is warm he will move up to

- the cemetery office and continue working 3-4 hours per week and will continue to meet with members of the public when necessary.
- U. Herb VanGuilder said he would like to commend Doug Sheehan for the fine job he has done. Herb said he stops by the Cemetery once in a while and Doug has done a great job on the bookwork.
- V. Herb VanGuilder said the Cemetery Commissioners can take the job descriptions home to study and if we agree we can adopt them. He said if we don't agree, we can make changes.
- W. Louie Gabranski said that it should be noted that the descriptions supersede all previous versions.
- X. Marty Nitka said if the Commissioners adopt the job descriptions, that will be noted.
- Y. Frank Heald said the handout will help to explain the descriptions. He said in keeping with the Town staff, we will make John Grassi a limited term employee under the existing Town & Village Personnel Manual. He said John Grassi changes to the Cemetery Grounds Supervisor because he is responsible for staff, flowers, and will fit into the regular town pay scale.
- Z. Marty Nitka asked who will supervise John Grassi.
- AA. Frank Heald said he will, and that Kevin MacPherson will oversee him on a day-to-day basis.
- BB. Frank Heald explained that the Vermont labor laws have changed so John Grassi is not a part-time employee and now becomes a Limited Term Appointment for a 6-month period. He said this could be extended by a month or two at his discretion and this goes with regular pay and benefits on a limited term basis.
- CC. Louie Gabranski asked why do part time people get all the benefits.
- DD. Herbert VanGuilder said they were seasonal employees with minimal benefits.
- EE. Brett Sanderson said the unemployment and labor laws have changed drastically.
- FF. Marty Nitka asked if this could be tabled until the next meeting.
- GG. Frank Heald said there was another item of urgency and that is the bank below the flag poles. He said they have talked about using rip rap, grass, matting and have paid Tim Calabrese for a planting plan.
- HH. Frank Heald said he met with Tim Calabrese a month ago and asked him to submit a cost for his planning plan, but still has not heard from him.
- II. Frank Heald said he went out into the marketplace to come up with the wholesale cost for plants designed to grow in that area. He said the cost for the plants to be delivered on site would be \$13,000 and this will help with the bank stabilization.
- JJ. Marty Nitka asked if the planting would be done in addition to the rip rap.
- KK. Frank Heald said he will provide three proposals that will include plans for:
- Planting
  - Rip Rap
  - Dirt
- LL. Frank Heald said the commissioners can look at each proposal carefully and should make a decision in June.
- MM. Louie Gabranski asked if there was enough money in the budget.
- NN. Herbert VanGuilder said yes and more after July 1<sup>st</sup>.
- OO. Louie Gabranski asked if the commissioners will have to approve the plan before anything is done.
- PP. Herbert Van Guilder said yes.

- QQ. Frank Heald said the staff can purchase red flowers, but won't spend \$13,000 unless the Commissioners approve.
- RR. Frank Heald said there is an estimate in the budget for two additional flag poles. He said before Memorial Day new flags will be in place.
- SS. Frank Heald said that Herb VanGuilder pointed out the proper configuration of the flags (i.e. American, Vermont, POW & Fire), so they have been fixed.
- TT. Louie Gabranski asked if the money would come from funds after July 1<sup>st</sup> or do we have the money now.
- UU. Frank Heald said you have had money in the budget for planting all along.
- VV. Herb VanGuilder said the voters approved the combining of 3 funds.
- WW. Louie Gabranski said he is in favor of the planting on the bank.
- XX. Brett Sanderson said the \$13,000 is only for the plants and we will need to pay for the planting.
- YY. Frank Heald said there is a fair amount of labor in planting and the Commissioners may not want to accomplish everything in the same year, but the upper piece should be done for the stabilization.
- ZZ. Herb VanGuilder said that we had not discussed the question of how much green space we were to retain on the northwest edge of the upper cemetery (referring to the Creaser request).
- AAA. Action was deferred pending a site visit.

**6. Set Date for Next Meeting**

- A. Next meeting is scheduled on Wednesday, June 21, 2017.

**7. Adjourn**

- A. MOTION by Brett Sanderson and seconded by Martin Nitka to adjourn.
- B. Meeting was adjourned at 4:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Pam Cruickshank  
Recording Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Herbert VanGuilder, Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Martin Nitka

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Brett Sanderson

\_\_\_\_\_  
David Harlow