

**TOWN OF LUDLOW  
BOARD OF CEMETERY COMMISSIONERS**

**REGULAR MEETING  
HEALD AUDITORIUM**

**Wednesday, May 19, 2021**

**Board Members Present:**

Brett Sanderson  
Bob Brandt

Lou Gabranski  
Bruce Schmidt

Herb Van Guilder

**Others Present:**

Doug Sheehan

Eric Chattergee – Okemo Valley TV

**1. Call to Order**

A. Brett Sanderson called the meeting at 5:04.

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

A. Scott Murphy said none are necessary.

**3. Comments from Citizens**

A. There were none.

**4. Approve Minutes of Previous Meeting**

A. Brett Sanderson said that the minutes to be reviewed are from April 21, 2021.

**B. Motion by Bob Brandt and seconded by Louie Gabranski to accept the minutes from April 21, 2021 as presented.**

**5. Sexton's Report**

A. Doug Sheehan asked about charges for mausoleums and discounts.

B. Scott Murphy said that they would discuss that later on in the agenda.

C. Louis Gabranski asked about the Gendron lots.

D. Doug Sheehan said that Brett Sanderson had fixed it. They put the other 3 cornerstones back in.

E. Herb Van Guilder said that they need to get on the ball and get the computer work done. He said that Doug Sheehan should be in the office during the open hours. He said that lots of people come in. We need to get a new system.

F. Doug Sheehan said this is another system, a GPS system. He said that he is in the office every day for about an hour or so.

G. Louis Gabranski said that someone should be at the cemetery at least 5 to 6 hours per day. We should connect the computer up there. He asked Scott Murphy to look into it.

H. Scott Murphy said he would. He said that they will discuss the GPS system at the meeting, next month. We don't have all of the information yet.

**6. Buildings & Grounds Report**

A. Herb Van Guilder asked about the grates on the sluiceway.

B. Doug Sheehan said they are in the garage. He said they left them off because they weren't working well. People walked on them and bent them. The sluiceway was clogged.

C. Scott Murphy said they were taken off to repair the bent one. They keep the sluiceway clear. He said they will get the grates back up.

D. Louie Gabranski said that they should screen all the way down to the road and in front.

E. Scott Murphy said they thought it might overrun the road and wash the road out. He said if the grates are not working, they will try something else. He said that the grates are not that effective.

F. Doug Sheehan said that Kevin kept them cleaned out through the winter and still does.

7. **Review Draft & Possibly Approve Cemetery Rules & Regulations**

- A. Scott Murphy said that the version that was included in their packets was about to be adopted last fall, but wasn't. He said the changes made in October have been included in this draft, along with the changes suggested at the April meeting. He said that in order to have something in place that addresses mausoleums, he recommends approving this draft. They can always change it later on.
- B. Louie Gabranski said that on page 1, item 1b says the lot size is 5' x 10' but it should say for one burial
- C. Doug Sheehan said it says that in item 1e.
- D. Herb Van Guilder said that under General Conditions, item 6c said picnics are not allowed. He said that we have always welcomed people. Years ago, Okemo said we could cut the brush down to the bank. People like to eat down there to look at the views. He hopes that they aren't getting so picayune.
- E. Scott Murphy said it is in there to protect them in case of an activity that we don't want.
- F. Brett Sanderson said like big gatherings.
- G. Herb Van Guilder said that for item 4a, he would like to add "without approval of the commissioners."
- H. Louis Gabranski said that for item 1e, he would like per lot site instead of grave site.
- I. **MOTION by Bruce Schmidt and seconded by Bob Brandt to approve the Cemetery Rules and Regulations as amended.**
- J. Herb Van Guilder said that for item 1b he would like to add "and cannot be combined." People should not be allowed to combine lots.
- K. Bruce Schmidt asked Doug Sheehan for his opinion
- L. Doug Sheehan said he doesn't think they need to change it. It would make mausoleums not allowed.
- M. Herb Van Guilder said only 2 times before, was a single grave allowed for 2 people.
- N. **Brett Sanderson said there is a motion and second on the floor. Motion passed, all in favor except Herb Van Guilder.**
- O. Brett Sanderson said that they can still make changes in the future.

8. **Possibly Consider Rates for Perpetual Care & Locations for Mausoleums**

- A. Scott Murphy said that Doug Sheehan found several cemeteries where the regulations include that the owners and future owners of mausoleums are responsible to repairs on the mausoleums
- B. Doug Sheehan said that when a lot is sold, in addition to the cost of the lot, people pay \$250 per lot for perpetual care.
- C. Bruce Schmidt said that on page 3 says that we charge for perpetual care.
- D. Doug Sheehan said that one cemetery charges \$1,000 per lot plus 25% for perpetual care.
- E. Herb Van Guilder said we have to make a decision on mausoleums. He said that perpetual care includes trimming and mowing not monument work.
- F. Doug Sheehan said that if the deeds were issued before 2001, it says we take care of the monuments.
- G. Bob Brandt asked what we charge to put the casket into the mausoleum.
- H. Doug Sheehan said they talked about charging the regular price at their last meeting.
- I. Bruce Schmidt said there is no reason to do more for a mausoleum for perpetual care that a regular lot with a monument.
- J. Doug Sheehan said that granite lasts a long time.
- K. Herb Van Guilder said we have 3 mausoleums and asked if we have any protection if they fall apart. The owner should be responsible for repairs, not us. He said that perpetual care is trimming and mowing.
- L. Scott Murphy said that the current rate for perpetual care is \$250.00. He said that there isn't anything in the rules and regulations about repair costs. We can add that.
- M. Brett Sanderson asked about locations for mausoleums.
- N. Doug Sheehan said if someone buys a lot, and they want to build a mausoleum, they need to go to the commissioners for location.
- O. Herb Van Guilder said the commissioners need to make a site visit and decide where we will allow mausoleums.
- P. Brett Sanderson said that section 3j of the rules and regulations says that the commissioners must approve mausoleum size, foundation and location in the cemetery.
- Q. Louis Gabranski said there should be a separate section in the back for mausoleums. If someone bought lots and decide they want a mausoleum, they can switch lots later on. We should designate an area where mausoleums can go.

## 9. Possibly Prioritize Future Projects

- A. Scott Murphy said that they have an ongoing list of projects along with some suggestions for 2021.
- B. Herb Van Guilder said they need to finish the flag station. He said that he went to the Legion and Fire Department and told them what the flag station would look like. It's not done. They have not done the landscaping or cut back the brush. We need to get it done this year. He said that he is disappointed with the cemetery commission and management. We paid for a landscaping program and we need to complete the flag station.
- C. Scott Murphy said that we need to know specifically what needs to be done.
- D. Brett Sanderson said we never had a plan and it looks great
- E. Herb Van Guilder said that we had a landscape plan and work is not getting done. If the commissioners don't want to do the work, I will do it.
- F. Bob Brandt said we should not be planting there. He said the cedar trees are not doing well because the deer are eating them. It is mowed there.
- G. Louis Gabranski asked about lights on the flags.
- H. Bob Brandt said there are flood lights there.
- I. Bruce Schmidt said we should look at how much money we have to spend before June 30<sup>th</sup> or to carry over. He suggested we discuss the financials and come back to this.
- J. Herb Van Guilder said they have \$130,000 and many projects that are long past due. He said that he had mentioned before that they should hire another person. They are not even cutting the brush. We have the money and the carry over stays with the Cemetery Commission. We have money, but no help. We should hire another person.
- K. Bruce Schmidt said he is not in favor of adding staff. If the town manager or Kevin MacPherson want to hire someone, it is up to them. We would have to add workman's comp. We do need to get this list down. With the surplus, we shouldn't have a budget this high. We can hire contractors to do the work. We need to get the flag station to the expected levels. He disagrees with Herb Van Guilder about hiring someone, but respects Herb Van Guilder's opinion. If we were supposed to do something with the flag station, we should do it. We should hire out the project.
- L. Louis Gabranski said we should do the upper-level bathroom.
- M. Bruce Schmidt said that he does not feel that is necessary, but also respects Louis Gabranski's opinion. He would rather put the money into cornerstones, paving the road and the directory. He said that the portable toilet may not be the best, but Louis Gabranski has mentioned it several times.
- N. Louis Gabranski said that older people have to go to the bathroom more often. We need to fix it up and dedicate it to older people.
- O. Bruce Schmidt said we should have the portable toilet cleaned out 2 times per week. He does agree that older people need to go to the bathroom more often.
- P. Doug Sheehan said that it is rare that anyone uses the bathroom. He said that last year, we did not use a whole roll of toilet paper.
- Q. Brett Sanderson asked how many lots were sold in the next row.
- R. Doug Sheehan said about 20.
- S. Brett Sanderson said they could pave the road.
- T. Bruce Schmidt said how do we get to the bottom of the flag station situation. Herb Van Guilder doesn't feel that it is complete, how do we get it completed. Do we need to replace the trees? It doesn't look bad. He said that he does drive through the cemetery and asked what are we missing to finish it. Is there are plan.
- U. Scott Murphy said he doesn't have a plan.
- V. Herb Van Guilder said there was supposedly a folder in the office with landscaping and plantings and the plan that he drew up. He doesn't recall every detail. He said that when he went to the Fire Department and the Legion, he described and explained the landscaping on the bank, and a row of poppies, the brush would be cut back on the right side. You can see the flag station from most of the cemetery. He wants to board to go up there with him and he will show them. He said there is a plan for the whole cemetery.
- W. Scott Murphy said he would go up there with Herb Van Guilder and he thinks he has that folder. He said the 2 of us can go up.
- X. Herb Van Guilder said he has a copy. He said that both Bruce Schmidt and Brett Sanderson have managed people and should be able to understand finances. He said we should hire another part time employee and it would cost us 20 – 30% less than hiring out to a company to cut brush and not waste the taxpayers' money. We always had 3 people there before.
- Y. Scott Murphy said he will work with Herb Van Guilder on the flag station.
- Z. Herb Van Guilder said all of the stuff on the list should be done. He said to ask Kevin MacPherson to tell us what he wants to get done and then maybe hire a company.
- AA. Bob Brandt said he has looked at other cemeteries and they power wash the stones. We should start with one section, straighten the stones and then power wash them. There is a gravel section that we should patch. The cedar trees should be pulled out.

- BB. Bruce Schmidt said if things should be done, why aren't they being done, just pull out those trees. Kevin MacPherson and Scott Murphy will make the decisions. He said that in Ludlow, the boards do not tell the departments what to work on. The Select Board doesn't tell highway to pave a road. If poppy seeds are not the best idea, find something else that will work. When a job on the list is done, take it off the list. If there is roof work to be done, get prices. Spend the money. If we need another flower pot, get it. Deal with the maintenance issues. It is hard to find workers, pay the premium and get a contractor.
- CC. Doug Sheehan said the shingles on the new tomb also are coming off and it needs to be repaired.
- DD. Herb Van Guilder said we should be able to cut the list in half, finance and pay for it.

#### 10. Cemetery Financial Update

- A. Scott Murphy said that they have \$64,307 to carry over. They budgeted \$113,586 expenses for FY2021 and spent \$52,152, leaving them with \$61,434. There is also \$15,000 that will be transferred into their account from Public Funds. They expect to spend \$60,000 through the end of the fiscal year, leaving them with \$110,000 for next year.
- B. Louis Gabranski said they should fix the bathroom in the upper level.
- C. Herb Van Guilder suggested contacting the Old Time Cemetery or Northeast Cemetery Association. He suggested Tom Griffin. He has the contact information.
- D. Scott Murphy said that would be a big help.
- E. Doug Sheehan said that he has already called Tom Griffin and also other cemeteries. He said that Hope Cemetery in Barre had wanted to do this, but it was too expensive – about \$40,000.
- F. Scott Murphy said he would bring back information for next month.
- G. Doug Sheehan said we would need a GPS map of the cemetery.
- H. Bruce Schmidt said make it a priority. We have done nothing. People need to know where the graves are located. We are building this for the future.

#### 11. New Business

- A. Louis Gabranski said that Bruce Schmidt made a comment comparing the Cemetery Commission with departments of the town. The Select Board had nothing to do with us. As far as he is concerned, the town is a subcontractor of the Cemetery Commission. The \$25,000 should not have been taken out of the Cemetery budget. The Cemetery Commission runs the cemetery, not the town.
- B. Scott Murphy said to clarify; the Select Board is responsible for the Town Budget. The town workers are contracted by the commissioners to do work for the cemetery. You could hire another company to work for you. The Cemetery Commissioners do set the budget for the cemetery, but it is included in the overall town budget.
- C. Louis Gabranski asked about the Electric Company or the schools.
- D. Scott Murphy said they are completely separate entities and not part of the town.
- E. Louis Gabranski said the cemetery is a separate unit, just like the electric company.
- F. Scott Murphy said the Cemetery board sets its own budget, but it is then incorporated into the town budget.
- G. Brett Sanderson agreed with Scott Murphy.
- H. Herb Van Guilder said not since he's been on the board. He said that he had defended the cemetery budget at town meetings.
- I. Scott Murphy said not now. It is now part of the town budget.
- J. Bruce Schmidt asked Louis Gabranski if he thinks the Select Board has a different philosophy for the town than the Cemetery Commission.
- K. Louis Gabranski said that the Select Board should not make decisions for the Cemetery Commission.
- L. Bruce Schmidt asked about vision and what is best.
- M. Louis Gabranski said there is not much difference and we should work together, but the Cemetery Commission should control everything at the cemetery.
- N. Bruce Schmidt said at town meeting, the voters said the Cemetery budget should be included in the town budget; they didn't want to vote separately. That was when the Cemetery budget got voted down. Bruce Schmidt said he will look it up and said it hasn't always been separated. He said that Frank Heald was concerned about the amount of money being spent. He will clarify this for the next meeting.
- O. Herb Van Guilder said that since he has been on the board, the Cemetery has always hired its own help and there was a base person, the Sexton and that person gave orders to the help. We had a crew of about 3 – 4 people and the commissioners were responsible for those people. He said that Frank Heald agreed to manage the operations on behalf of the commissioners.
- P. Louis Gabranski said 30 – 35 years ago, the Commissioners ran the cemetery, not the town.

12. **Other Business**

- A. There was none.

13. **Set Date for Next Meeting & Possible Agenda Items**

- A. Directory Proposals
- B. Next regular meeting - Wednesday, June 16, 2021 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. Scott Murphy said none is needed.

16. **Adjourn**

- A. **MOTION by Bruce Schmidt and seconded by Bob Brandt to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously.**
- B. Meeting adjourned at 6:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisha Klaiber

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Brett Sanderson, Chairman

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Bruce Schmidt

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Bob Brandt

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Herb Van Guilder

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Lou Gabranski