

**Minutes from 9/29/21 Cemetery Commission meeting
6:00 PM**

**Remote Access Meeting with Zoom
(Under Emergency Order for Pandemic)
Approved 12/15/21**

Members present: Walter Tibbetts (WT), Susan Millinger (SM), Dina Stander (DS).
Meeting called to order at 6:06

1. Review and Approval of minutes of August 18 meeting. A motion to accept the minutes of 8/18/21 was made, seconded, and approved by a unanimous roll call vote.
2. Cemetery Website Update. DS has contacted Gail Fleischaker of the Web Communications Committee. At present there is nothing to add or change on the Commission's website. For future discussion: an improved version of Shutesbury regulations for the website.
3. Cemetery regulations. It was decided that the members of the Commission would look at the various sets of regulations from other cemeteries collected by the previous secretary, Janice Stone, and SM. DS suggests that SM look at Leyden's and include that link. Looking at these lists and the existing Shutesbury regulations, members will list the specific regulations which each considers important to include in Shutesbury's improved regulations as well as the categories of regulations to include, and the general organizing structure to use. At the next meeting we will compare our lists and decide on categories and structure. WT pointed out that ease of maintenance should be one goal.
4. Need to Review and Inventory the Cemetery Documents in Town Hall. WT has spoken to both the Town Administrator and the Town Clerk about the Commission's need to review and inventory the cemetery documents housed in Town Hall. He was told that the meeting would need to be open to the public and must be a hybrid meeting. DS will check again with the Town Clerk. It would be good to do this soon, but the next meeting should focus on compilation of a more comprehensive set of regulations.
5. Gravestone Cleaning Workshop. DS has contacted TaMara Conde about leading a workshop; she will contact her again about an initial presentation on Zoom. It would be best held in the later spring or summer.
6. Discussion of the process for buying lots, for burials, etc. WT provided a helpful detailed description of the responsibilities of the Cemetery Commission he currently performs with regard to purchase of lots and preparations etc. for burials. This could be thought of as the compilation of a *Cemetery Commissioner's Handbook*.
 - a. Purchase of a lot.
 - I. The interest person contacts WT expressing interest in purchasing a lot, and identifies the cemetery in question. WT and the interested person(s)

meet in person. WT lays out a map of the cemetery to show what is available; then they go to the cemetery in question and look at the area(s) the person expresses interest in. WT puts stakes or rocks to show the outlines of the lot. How many lots is the person interested in buying? Are these for a cremation, or a full burial?

2. When the decision has been made, WT and the purchaser(s) go to the office for the actual purchase. WT fills out the form for ordering a lot; a check is written; WT signs for it.
 - a. Prices: From the Price list:
Resident: for 1/8 of a lot (4 1/2' x 9' = 1 grave) = \$350; 1/4 = \$700; 1/2 = \$1400; full (18x18 = 8 burials) = \$2800.
 - b. Non-resident: for 1/8: \$550; for 1/4 = \$1100; for 1/2 = \$2200; for full lot = \$4400.
3. The Town Treasurer gets the check and a copy of the order; a copy of the order goes to the purchaser; WT keeps a copy for Cemetery Commission files with the check xeroxed on the back. The Town Treasurer also fills out a standard form for money which goes to the Treasurer; WT retains a copy of this for the files.
 - a. WT intends to make electronic copies of these records
 - b. WT has multiple copies of maps for West Cemetery; on one he notes each lot sold.
4. The maps: There are three different maps for the West Cemetery: one for Roads 1-5; one for the newer section; one for the Luther Henry section. There is no map for the oldest section. The Corbin Collection gives descriptions for that area but is not detailed about precisely where the burials are. There are also maps for Pratt Corner Cemetery and Locks Pond Cemetery. The maps of these old cemeteries do not indicate who is buried under stones which lack legible names.
 - The most inaccurate map is that for the main part of West, which was drawn as though roads and lots are a certain set size, although this is not the reality on the ground.
 - Maps should be stored in a central place in Town Hall, perhaps in a Cemetery Commission filing cabinet.

b. Process for burials The funeral director usually calls WT; sometimes the family does.

WT has to know the lot and the time of burial.

The question was raised: what if the family doesn't want to use a funeral home? Shutesbury regulations require the use of a funeral director so all State laws are followed. DS comments that "family-directed burials are coming" and we should be prepared for them.

1. Digging the grave: WT marks the graves for digging.

The funeral home contacts William W. Clark Excavating, which digs the graves except for the green section, where graves are dug by Grassroots Landscaping of Leverett.

Clark can dig if the frost is not too hard, so winter burials do not usually pose problems.

-Vaults Used to be required by State law, but are so no longer. Cement Vaults are still required in Shutesbury except in the green section. The Vault company provides and places the vaults, rugs, etc.

-Cremation graves: WT digs the spaces for cremations himself, with a post-holer and shovel. He is willing to let family members dig a cremation grave if they wish, but asks that the family let him finish the grave, so all graves can have a common finish.

-WT likes to check in with Dennis Clark to make sure everything has gone alright. Clarks finish up all burials.

2. The death certificate and burial permit. The death certificate goes to the Town Clerk electronically. The burial permit may be sent WT by the funeral director, or may be brought to WT at the gravesite. WT fills out his section: the cemetery, the lot number, the position in the lot, and his signature. It goes on file in Cemetery Commission files. Note: the separate burials in a plot are lettered in the records, but not all Commissioners used the same lettering system (so “b” could be in one place under one Commissioner, and in another place for another Commissioner.)

7 Unanticipated items. None.

8 Date for next meeting: Wednesday, October 20 at 6 p.m.

9 Adjournment at 8:19 p.m. A motion to adjourn was made, seconded, and unanimously approved by roll call vote.

Submitted by

Susan Millinger

Cemetery Commission secretary

