



Town of Ayer

CEMETERY COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes from November 28, 2022

Attendance: Members Betsy Diskin and Susan Tordella-Williams; remotely: Sam Goodwin

Also in Attendance: Robert Pontbriand, Town Manager, Dan Van Schalkwyk, DPW Director, and David Dean, Cemetery Superintendent

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 4:30 pm by D. Van Schalkwyk in the First Floor Meeting Room of the Ayer Town Hall.

Discussion of organization of Commission.

Motion: A motion was made by S. Tordella-Williams and seconded by B. Diskin to organize the Commission with S. Goodwin as Chair, B. Diskin as Vice Chair, and S. Tordella-Williams as Clerk. **Motion passed 3-0.**

D. Van Schalkwyk gave a 20-minute presentation on the history and current situation of the cemetery, which was established in 1859, and privately owned and operated until April 2022, when the Town of Ayer assumed responsibility.

Members asked questions during the presentation, which included explanations of the burial practices, maps of the four areas, and designations of the soldiers' and indigent peoples' areas.

The Town voted to allocate \$41,000 in 22-23 for cemetery maintenance and management and a draft capital budget for 2024 to repair roads, grates and the storage building. S. Tordella-Williams asked D. Van Schalkwyk to share a financial report for the next meeting, as well as an analysis of the fee structure as compared to other cemeteries.

D. Van Schalkwyk reported that he outsourced the transition of paper records to electronic and said the commission's next step would be to review regulations and fees and provide other recommendations to manage the facility.

D. Van Schalkwyk suggested, and the board agreed to initially meet monthly to get things rolling, then quarterly.

S. Tordella-Williams asked the board members to consider allowing green burials and the members agreed to learn more about them. S. Tordella-Williams will research green burials and give a presentation at the next meeting.

Scheduling of Next Meeting:

The Committee scheduled the next meeting for Tuesday, January 10, 2023 at 4:30pm in-person in the First Floor Meeting Room of the Ayer Town Hall and remote participation.

Motion: A motion was made by S. Goodwin and seconded by B. Diskin to adjourn the meeting at 5:24pm. Motion passed 3-0.

Minutes recorded and submitted by Susan Tordella-Williams, Clerk.

Minutes reviewed and approved by the Cemetery Commission on 1/10/23

Signed: _____



Susan Tordella-Williams