

Cemetery Trustee Meeting

Minutes for August 2, 2021

Approved

PRESENT AT MEETING:

- Cemetery Trustees: Steve Trombly, James Whalen, Jay Duffy
- Members from the Public

Meeting called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Steve Trombly.

Steve Trombly welcomed members of the Milford community in attendance to speak. Topics introduced and discussed with the community are summarized as follow:

Perpetual Care Trust Fund

The Cemetery Trustees provide a handout to attended in addition to outlining summary points below. A key objective as to provide background and set a common foundation enabling the discussion.

- Fund is maintained by the Trustees of the Trust Funds
- Originally establish so individuals could “pay extra” to have their lots maintained
- The Trust consists of individual accounts and ONLY INTEREST could be used to maintain lots
- The Town eventually took over the cemetery’s maintenance (Public Works)
 - The Town cannot touch the principle of this account.
 - The Town can only access interest (~15,000 per year). Interest not verified.
 - This interest goes into the general fund for Public Works (caretakers of the cemeteries) budget.

Public Discussion: Members of voiced several areas of interest and concern pertaining to this fund.

- *Trust Fund Interest:* Concern expressed that interest moved to General Fund and public works budget is being used for Cemetery Care only and not for other public works projects.
- *Trust Fund Principal Balance:* With a large principle balance in the trust, attendees expressed interest in understanding the trust details and if it could be opened up to use some of the funds for the cemetery.

Right to Inter Fund

The Cemetery Trustee’s handout also included information on this fund. Key points about the fund are summarized as follows:

- Fund is NOT a Trust Fund
- Fund can be used ONLY for the care and maintenance of cemeteries (equipment, tree removal, street signs, paving, stone repairs, ect.
- Cemetery Trustees control the spending of this fund.
- The fund consists of proceeds from the sale of lots.
- Fund balance is ~112,000 (it has taken about 15 years to grow this)
 - It is important to consider that the ONLY income is from sale of lots
 - It is hard predicting how many lots will be sold in a year

Flower Trust

- *Background:* This fund was created by Rodney Woodman who owed Woodman’s Florist in order for people to have flowers placed on graves in perpetuity. The manager of Trust Account funds is thru Citizens Bank.
 - Flower Trust Fund Contributions for ~85 Lots: \$ 24,900.00
 - Flower Trust Balance as of December 31, 2020 \$ 49, 774.26

Public attendees from the community expressed a desire for a copy of the Trust to ensure that the funds are being managed in accordance with the objectives of the trust document.

- *Contributions to the Funds:* In 2014, new contributions we no longer accepted. Contributions prior to 2014 are still maintained.

Public attendees expressed interest to understand why this decision was made and who authorized the change.

- *Funding of Flowers Yearly:* As this is a Trust account, Flowers can be funded from *Interest (only)*. Interest is accrued for Flower Fund and tracked separately and allocated to “lots” based on weighted value of donations. It was noted by Cemetery Trustee’s that in the current economic climate, fixed financial instruments do not yield much interest. As example, Cemetery Trustee Jim Whalen mentioned that the 2020 accrued interest for the Trust Fund as \$640.00. This could pose a challenge in sourcing and planting flowers.
- *Operational Sourcing & Planting of Flowers:* The planting of flowers has not taken place for 2020 and 2021.

Public attendees expressed frustration over this situation and asked Cemetery Trustees to ensure a plan is in place to address this issue moving forward.

Riverside Cemetery Irrigation and Water Stations: The irrigation system has been out of service for a number of years. It was mentioned by Cemetery Trustees that the root cause was due to lines bursting following the winter.

Public attendees expressed frustration with this situation and asking Cemetery Trustees ensure a plan in place with Public Works to address this.

Repair of granite wall and removal of tree at Riverside Gate: Cemetery Trustee, Steve Trombly stated that he has been in contacted with Public Works to address these issues.

Contact Information on Milford Town website: Jay Duffy will be working with IT to add his contact information to Cemetery Trustee page on town website to enable public to contact him directly. It was also mentioned that Public Works contact is also on Cemetery Trustees page and that Public requests will be forwarded to Cemetery Trustees by Public Works contact.

Requesting a Selectman Liaison: Cemetery Trustee Jay Duffy, introduced a discussion to have a liaison with the Board of Selectmen. It was agreed to further this discussion, a MOU is needed that would require review and approval of the Cemetery Trustees and Board of Selectmen. Jay Duffy offered to draft a proposal covering the goal, objectives, scope of liaison and roles and responsibilities.

Establishing regularly scheduled Cemetery Trustee Meeting: The cemetery trustees discussed that while all meeting are open to public, there are two types Public forums;

- Quarterly meetings held at a location such as Town Hall where the Public has the opportunity to speak directly on topics important to them and get updated from Cemetery Trustees.
- More frequent, working sessions, that are intended for the Cemetery Trustees to work on topics. The location for “working meeting” would be @ the Public Works from starting @ 8:00 AM. The public is welcome to attend these meeting in a listen only capacity.
- For all meetings, the public will be notified of the schedule and meeting minutes via online posting on the Cemetery Trustee web page. Additionally, the meeting schedule and agenda will be posted at locations including Town Hall, Public Works and the Library.

Jay Duffy made motion to have working session with 4 weeks of the August 2nd meeting. Motion passed 3 – 0.

Approval of minutes from June30th meeting: Motion to approve by Jim Whalen. Motion passed 3.0.

Meeting adjourned at 7:58pm by Steve Trombley.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Whalen
August 9th , 2021