

**HARTFORD CEMETERY STUDY COMMITTEE**

Meeting Minutes

**MEETING DATE:** June 25, 2018  
**PRESENT:** Ken Parker, Jeff Knight, Toby Dayman, Art Peale Jeff Newton  
**ABSENT:** Larry Hudson, Sue Buckholz  
**LIAISONS:** Dennis Brown  
**COMMUNITY MEMBERS:** None  
**RECORDED BY:** Toby Dayman

Call to order at 6:08 PM.

1. Handouts included:
  - Draft meeting Minutes of June 11, 2018 meeting
  - 2019 Town Budget for cemeteries as reviewed by Town Manager (Leo Pullar) and presented to the Selectboard (hereafter referred to as Board)
  - Blank cost estimate spreadsheet for members to use in their respective cemeteries to list those items requiring identification and corresponding cost.
2. The draft Meeting Minutes of June 11, 2018 approved with no changes.
3. Ken presented summary of his June 19 presentation to the Board on the issue of the Town accepting and keeping the original cemetery burial documents in the town vault.
  - Issue discussed and not resolved by Board. Issues seem to revolve around record/information access and retrieval by the public as well as cost implications. Town manager to investigate further and respond to Board.
  - All members had general sentiment that these one-of-a-kind records contain the only information as to the location of those interred in each cemetery. Thus they become critical to the historical heritage of the cemeteries, and hence, the Town, the people, and descendants. Their safe-keeping against fire, water, and age damage becomes critical to assure preservation.
  - Dennis believed the Historical Registry Grant would cover only the recording of oral histories and not any cemetery record collection, copy digitizing, and cataloging as Committee had recommended to Matt Osborn in the previous meeting.
  - Scott sensed the issue might revolve more greatly around the information retrieval process, digitizing, and cataloging the information, and not so much a question of total volume size. Ken indicated the criticalness to get the records as they exist into the Town vault for safe-keeping at a minimum, and if resources limited now, deal with the necessary tasks of digitizing and cataloging later.
  - Scott would check with other towns as to their cemetery record storage procedures and locations.
  - Resolved for all cemeteries to compile a list and description of their records so that the Town could see an approximation of total size and dimensions of requested storage volume involved.
4. Toby inquired as to the location of a few cemeteries including Simons, Potter's Field, and Ballardville. No one could locate Ballardville. Further research needed.
5. Cemetery finances and cost estimates: Ken stated he organized his 2019 Budget Request of \$46,900 for the Hartford Cemetery into four major items – mowing and trimming, road repair, routine maintenance, and headstone repair. This organization may be an example to use, or modify as circumstances warrant, when creating an estimate of costs for each cemetery.
  - The Town manager reduced this number to \$7,500, the amount of the 2018 Budget.
  - Toby mentioned the first step of identifying for each cemetery the tasks (items), getting quantities of those items needing maintenance and/or repair, and then later breaking items into levels of priority and importance.
  - Ken stated members also need to get costs for each of the estimate items to establish and know a total cost.

- Cleaning headstones discussed. Ken suggested breaking them down by size for cleaning cost estimation. Art mentioned that from his experience a small stone may take an hour whereas a 4-5' high stone may take 5-6 hours to clean. He uses water and a scrub brush although VOCA sells a cleaner named D-2 that they recommend. Toby estimated that 90% of stones in the lower area of Quechee Cemetery need cleaning.
6. Toby questioned about the need of addressing and including the diocese's cemeteries - St. Vincent's Cemetery and Mt. Olivet Cemetery. It was resolved that the issues of these cemeteries fall under the purview, finances, and decisions of the diocese and not that of the Committee and its final Report.
    - Two commented that part of the St. Vincent's belongs to the Town. However, no one knew the location, boundary, configuration of the Town's area in this cemetery. Issue needs further investigation and resolution.
  7. Jeff indicated he was nearing completion on a draft of Rules and Regulations for cemeteries. Once complete, he would email everyone.
  8. Ken indicated he would talk to Lebanon (NH) regarding their cemetery maintenance.
  9. Ken felt we are headed in the right direction to get the items identified, estimated, and pulled into a financial picture within the next couple of weeks. Members need to look at their cemeteries and go through the identification of items and their cost. Once the all costs known and totaled, then a discussion of recommendations for the Report can ensue.
  10. Motion to adjourn made and passed at 7:42 PM. Next meetings scheduled for the Mondays of July 9 and July 23.