



## CEMETERY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

June 16, 2025

Present: Jim Kenney, Chairman  
Darryl Darby, Member/Cemetery Sexton  
Gladys Wheeler, Member

### Minutes

- **The meeting was called to order** at 10:01am. Roll call was taken
- **Acknowledgement of meeting recording status** – This meeting was not recorded.
- **Finalization of the May 5 meeting minutes.** – The draft of the minutes require editing and will be finalized at the July meeting.
- **Updates on recent activity / requests regarding the cemeteries** – D. Darby indicated that no new requests have been made of the Cemetery Sexton since the last meeting. He has been working with the Wheeler family for an interment of cremated remains on July 26.
- **Continued discussion: Burial costs paid by families include Sexton fees as well as costs and responsibilities for installation of corner markers.** The members discussed the best structure of the burial process to ensure that allocated graves are marked by corner markers as well as the most sensible way for fees to be paid. Included in the discussions were the burial permit (for deaths occurring in Peru), Cemetery Sexton fee, grave opening fees for both traditional casket burials as well as the interring of cremated remains. A portion of the discussion addressed if fees should be paid directly to the service providers or if the Funeral Director should pay all fees to the town and so that the town can disburse payment to the service providers. A suggestion was made to add a one-time Perpetual Care fee which could be used to purchase corner markers. Issues needing to be worked out include:
  - Are grave opening, corner marker installation and Sexton fees paid to the town by the Funeral Director and then disbursed by the accountant or paid by the families directly to the service providers.
  - If any of the Perpetual Care fee remains after the purchase of the corner markers, would the remainder go into the legacy Cemetery Commission account or the town general fund?
  - Should the Sexton or the Funeral Director purchase the corner markers for installation by the individual opening the grave?
  - Guidance may be obtained with a better understanding of how fees handled by the Building Inspector for permits, the Board of Health for permits and the Police Department for road details.
- **Update on communication of Cemetery Rules to families of recently deceased:** J. Kenney reported that an emailed message was followed up with a postal delivery requesting that a family install corner markers on a currently unmarked grave. This is consistent with the revised Cemetery Rules.
- **Update on activities related to use of current budget:** J. Kenney reported that a contractor has been identified who'll be able to reset the Brown headstone in North Cemetery. A request of the Selectboard to reallocate funding from one Cemetery Commission budget item to another will be made on June 23. If approved, the proper paperwork will be submitted to support this request since the work will be done after

the end of the fiscal year. (Post-meeting note: Since all funds were approved under the same Article at the Annual Town Meeting, moving funds between projects is permitted.)

Granite posts have been selected to re-define the South Thompson Burial Ground and are currently being drilled so that hooks can be used to support chains between posts. Hardware will be purchased to complete the work.

A flagpole for South Cemetery has been ordered and is currently being shipped. The flagpole will be installed by the Highway Department as time allows.

- Discuss selection for **Friends of the Cemetery Commission** acknowledgment: Last month's acknowledgement went to Pat Brophy at Camp Danbee. The members of the Cemetery Commission agreed on this month's recipient, who'll be contacted prior to submission to the Live Wire.
- **Planning for next Cemetery Commission activities or next Cemetery Commission Meetings** – The next meeting will be held on July 21 at 10:00am in the Community Center.
- **Any Other Business** – Expansion of South Cemetery: D. Darby reminded the members that the owner of the land adjacent to South Cemetery was considering a sale to the town to allow an expansion of South Cemetery. The owner has now indicated an interest to keeping the land but offered the space as cemetery parking in exchange for a property tax waiver. Following discussion, J. Kenney made a motion that the Cemetery Commission would not be supportive of pursuing the landowner's proposal using the rationale that the space is not needed for parking at South Cemetery and that tax waivers are outside the remit of the Cemetery Commission. D. Darby abstains. G. Wheeler seconded. Vote was 2-0 to not pursue the arrangement. J. Kenney to inform the Selectboard of this discussion and outcome. (Post-meeting note: The Selectboard ratified this vote at their June 23 meeting.)

The topic of Green Burials was briefly discussed because of a May 30 article in the Berkshire Eagle. Members had previously discussed this topic but have not come to the point of being able to propose an update to the Cemetery Rules to allow a green burial in Peru. Interestingly, it appears that green burials require additional long-term cemetery maintenance and are more costly in town's that do permit this.

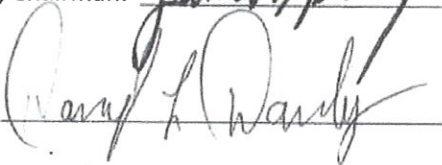
- Adjourn Meeting at 11:34am

Approved and submitted:

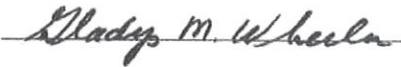
James Kenney, Chairman:



Darryl Darby:



Gladys Wheeler:



Date:

7/21/25