

Village of South Amherst

Cemetery Board Meeting

2/09/2022

NOTE: January 12, 2022 meeting was cancelled due to COVID precautions

Mayor Leshinski called the meeting to order at 6:00pm

Board Members present: Rosemary Leshinski, Marilyn Makruski, Andrew Johnson

Village Council Liaison: Scott Jones

Visitors: Mayor Leshinski, Jeanne Maschari of 306 East Main Street, South Amherst

Agenda

Mayor Leshinski asked if there were any additions to the agenda. Rosemary Leshinski added 1) Perpetual Fund discussion, 2) Use of village truck 3) Pioneer Cemetery update. Andrew Johnson moved to accept the agenda with the additions. Rosemary Leshinski seconded. The roll was called in favor.

Election of 2022 Chairperson

Mayor Leshinski asked for a motion to open the floor for nominations of the 2022 Cemetery Board Chairperson. Andrew Johnson moved to open the floor. Rosemary Leshinski seconded. The roll was called in favor.

Marilyn Makruski nominated Rosemary Leshinski for Chairperson position. Andrew Johnson seconded the nomination. No further nominations were named. Andrew Johnson moved to close the floor to further nominations. Marilyn Makruski seconded. The roll was called favor of electing Rosemary Leshinski as the Chairperson for 2022.

Visitors

Jeanne Maschari was present to discuss the handling of veteran flag placement at the cemetery. Jeanne and her family volunteer to place flags at the gravesites of Veterans. The flags are provided by the Veteran's Administration and Jeanne stores them off site of the cemetery and village buildings. The flags are placed just prior to Memorial Day and taken down after Veterans Day.

Last year Paula Knodel, Cemetery Clerk, received calls from family members who had personally placed flags at the site of loved ones. They were upset that they had been taken away. These flags were replaced, and Paula applied a small piece of white Duck Tape on the wooden polls signifying that they were to remain.

Discussion was had on how to proceed in 2022. Jeanne and the Board decided that, prior to placing the veteran flags this year, those that were already placed would be looked at to determine if they were in good shape to remain. Damaged flags would be removed.

Meeting Minutes

Rosemary Leshinski moved to accept the minutes from the December 6, 2021 meeting. Andrew Johnson seconded. The roll was called in favor.

Reporting – Financial and Other

UAN Financial Reports for December 31, 2021 and January 31, 2022 were presented for review. Ref. **Exhibits A and B**. Details on what the reports represented were given for the benefit of new Board Member, Andrew Johnson and new Village Council Liaison, Scott Jones. Marilyn Makruski moved to accept the receipt of these reports. Andrew Johnson seconded. The roll was called in favor.

Paula Knodel, Cemetery Clerk, presented a statistical report she put together for years 2011 through 2021 showing the number of funerals and the number of graves sold by year along with the associated income. This tool will help guide in future budgeting and historical reviews. **Reference Exhibit C**.

Paula Knodel presented a 2022 year-to-date list of burials and lot sales along with the associated income. This is of special note due to the extraordinary amount of both burials (11) and sales (12) in January 2022. In January 2021 there was one burial and no lots sold. A good percentage of these totals are due to the COVID-19 crisis. **Reference Exhibit D**.

Paula Knodel presented her Prepaid Opening and Closing Fee reconciliation as of January 31, 2022. She audited the historical records that she inherited from prior clerks, making sure to note those who had been buried. A clean record of those who remain was created.

In the distant past there were times when someone had proof of prepayment but was not found to be on any listing. Paula suggested the Board may wish to keep an amount in reserve to cover the burial cost of anyone who can prove prepayment but is not on the list.

Andrew Johnson made a motion to reserve for a potential of four folk who could prove prepayment but had somehow not made the listing. This would require moving \$652.50 from the Operating Fund Account to Prepaid Opening/Closing Fund account. Rosemary Leshinski seconded. The roll was called in favor. This leaves the reconciled balance of Prepaid Opening/Closing Funds with a total of \$30,654.00 as of January 31, 2022. **Reference Exhibit E**.

Paula Knodel presented a recap of the UAN Cemetery Fund Summary report for years 2016 through 2021. A review of the Operating Fund and Perpetual Fund balances at each year end shows that the total increase in these fund balances was \$101,792. From 2016 through 2019, the Village Council appropriated \$25,000 for cemetery use as these cemetery funds had been almost totally depleted. This extra \$100,000 is most of the balances now held. Without that infusion of funds, these cemetery fund totals would only have increased by \$1,792. **Reference Exhibit F**.

The South Amherst Historical Society applied for grants to be used to improve Pioneer Cemetery. The society has secured \$1,500 in funding so far. The Society will be handling these funds it was grated.

The Board asked Paula Knodel to research what legally can be expended from the Perpetual Fund balances. She will follow up.

Due to length of meeting, the clerks list of Open Work Items along with the Cemetery Open Work Orders report was sent via email to the Board members prior to this meeting. Review will happen at March meeting.

Old Business

Progress on cemetery software research – Paula has reviewed one provider's program. Michelle Henke gave her information on UAN from the Ohio Auditor of State that she has yet to review. Andrew Johnson is willing to help with this project. They will continue to research and report.

Columbarium funding – Due to lack of funding at this time, Rosemary Leshinski moved to indefinitely table the discussion of building one at Evergreen Cemetery. Marilyn Makruski seconded. The roll was called in favor.

Standardize footer sizes – Emil Ruth of Locke's Go Green made this request after installing several footers last year. It would be easier for him not to have to make each form sized to order. The Board discussed and decided as orders come directly from monument companies and are customized per the headstone requirements, there would be no incentive to standardize sizes at this time. Rosemary Leshinski moved to indefinitely table this discussion. Andrew Johnson seconded. The roll was called in favor.

NSF check –The Law Director's office sent a follow-up letter on 2/4/2022 to the Michael Healy requesting that the funds be paid for the funeral of Phyllis Healy. Paula Knodel had conversations with Phyllis Healy's niece, Emily Casper, who informed that funds would be settling from the estate of Wilma Mayfield to Michael Healy. She estimated the settlement date to be in March 2022 and that there should be funds to cover the NSF check at that time.

New contractor - No progress has been made to find a new contractor to engrave Memorial Garden bricks. Research will continue for this.

Tent for Memorial Gardens – The Board discussed the purchase of a tent that could be temporarily set up at the Memorial Garden site. The tent could be rented by clients for various purposes such as "false gravesite setups" during inclement weather. Rosemary Leshinski moved that, with no cemetery workers to set up and take down, and with other issues of liability, this discussion would be indefinitely tabled. Andrew Johnson seconded. The roll was called in favor.

Snowblower purchase – The Board voted in November 2021 to contribute \$500 toward the purchase of a snowblower. The funds could be combined with other departments to purchase one large enough to handle needs at Town Hall and the fire station as well. The other departments did not wish to contribute to this purchase. Rosemary Leshinski moved to cancel the \$500 Purchase Requisition. Andrew Johnson seconded the motion. The roll was called in favor.

New Business

Clerk's office space - The clerk's office is temporarily set up in a corner of the Town Council Chambers. Office staff have indicated a desire to have space made available in the room adjoining the Records Clerk. This space is currently filled with file cabinets and racks of various village records. Scott Jones offered to help find inexpensive office furniture if needed. Andrew moved to approve this space for the clerk once most of the files and records have been stored elsewhere. Rosemary Leshinski seconded. The roll was called in favor.

Cemetery clean-up – A quote of \$250 was received by Locke's Go Green Services for picking up the flowers left from January burials and emptying the trash cans. There is no contracted service for garbage pick-up during the winter months. There is no village worker to assign the task to. The Water Board rejected the request for Dennis Heavener to handle this task. Rosemary Leshinski moved to accept the bid from Locke's. Andrew Johnson seconded. The roll was called in favor.

Board Member job description – Rosemary sent out an email earlier this week with a rough draft. There hasn't been a job description written prior to now. The Board decided to handle this discussion via email. Voting to be held at the next meeting.

Cemetery water drainage – There are problems with water not properly draining in sections B and L. The Leshinskis will look for a report that was prepared by Bramhall Engineering in 2019 and provide copies. Section B has been mapped and section L has not been mapped. The Board will work on getting quotes. Further discussion will be had at upcoming meetings.

Cemetery Board and Cemetery Clerk pay increases – These items have yet to be resolved by Council. Scott Jones will keep the Board informed.

Wreaths Across America – Paula Knodel received a call and email from Kathleen Kennedy regarding this national project. Andrew Johnson volunteered to call and discuss it with her. He will present his findings with the Board.

Future meeting via Zoom or other – Scott Jones is interested in holding future meetings with the capability of using Zoom or other internet platforms. The State of Ohio does not yet authorize the ability for member to vote using the platform. The Board will consider any alternative means of meeting as information becomes available.

Marketing Discussion – Scott Jones offered to help with marketing ideas for this year. He knows someone who can video the cemetery via drone.

Use of village truck – Rosemary asked if the Mayor and Scott Jones could find out if the cemetery can make use of the village truck just at the fire department does. The board members are employees of the village if that should be an issue. Answer can be given at any time, no need to wait for next meeting.

Rosemary Leshinski moved to adjourn. Marylin Makruski seconded. The roll was called with all in favor

Respectfully Submitted
Paula S Knodel, Cemetery Clerk