

**CEMETERY COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES**

January 24, 2013

5:00 P.M.

Engineering/Planning Conference Room, City Hall

MEMBERS PRESENT

Ald. Jason Sladky, Chairman
John Bilka
Ted Dirkman
Dennis Schneider
Jerry Waak
Eric Zabel

STAFF PRESENT

Greg Minikel
Kevin Glaeser
Sandy Ronski

OTHERS

Ald. Sladky called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Approval of the minutes from April 19, 2012

T. Dirkman made a motion to approve the minutes. J. Waak seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved as presented.

Discussion & possible action on Cemetery Fee Schedule

It was brought to the attention of the Commission members that several complaints have been received regarding the fees for the winter surcharge being charged when it was a mild winter, and there was no frost in the ground. A suggestion was made that the surcharge be waived at the discretion of the Operations Manager. T. Dirkman was not in favor of waiving the fee, because it was “too judgmental.” There may be frost in some areas and not in others, etc. Also, there can oftentimes be more damage, such as ruts, when the frost comes out of the ground. E. Zabel said that the City of Sheboygan cemetery, Wildwood, does not have a winter surcharge. D. Schneider said graves with lots of tree roots can sometimes take up to six hours to dig, and we don’t charge extra for that. He said that if we charge a winter surcharge, it should be because the weather is causing extra work; otherwise there is no reason for the charge. J. Waak was in favor of giving the manager the ability to waive the winter surcharge, especially since it is a period of just four months. T. Dirkman said that there are other expenses in winter other than additional labor costs associated with the digging, such as the weather is harder on equipment, etc.

Cemetery personnel requested the commission determine whether or not a fee should be charged when cremation urns are disinterred in order to place a traditional size vault on the same space. The urns are generally then placed on top of the traditional size vault. This causes extra work (especially in winter), because the urn has to first be carefully removed before the larger hole is dug. E. Zabel suggested allowing only one burial per space. T. Dirkman stated that is actually better to allow a second burial on the space and charge a second right of interment, because you are making more money per piece of land. J. Waak suggested charging an extra \$50. K. Glaeser suggested charging an additional hour of labor, because it is not unreasonable to think it might cause an extra hour of work.

Finally, it was suggested to increase the foundation removal fees to meet actual costs, since those have not been increased for several years. Removal of a single foundation would go

from \$25 to \$50 each, a single bronze marker set in concrete or a double foundation would go from \$50 to \$75 each, and a monument would go from \$0.08 to \$0.15 per square inch.

D. Schneider suggested that the fees be voted on separately, due to the differences in opinion on the winter surcharge. J. Bilka made a motion to approve the foundation removal fees as presented. E. Zabel seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

D. Schneider made a motion to charge \$50 for the disinterment of a cremation urn when digging a traditional size grave on the same space. J. Waak seconded the motion. The motion carried five to one with T. Dirkman opposing the motion.

D. Schneider made a motion to allow the Operations Manager the discretion to waive the winter surcharge. J. Waak seconded the motion. K. Glaeser said that if there is only two to four inches of frost, we can bust through that with the bucket on the backhoe. It is only when the frost gets deeper that we need to use the air hammer, which causes additional work because the ground needs to be taken out level by level. D. Schneider said that laying down plywoods does not really count as additional winter work, since they frequently lay down plywoods in the summer. J. Waak suggested only waiving the fee if someone complained about the winter surcharge and it was a legitimate complaint, meaning there was no frost. T. Dirkman said he would rather eliminate the charge altogether rather than get into these gray areas, because then you make unfair situations. D. Schneider said that there are already complaints, because you are charging extra for work that you are not doing. T. Dirkman said that you don't charge anymore if there is 10" in the ground compared to four. A vote was taken and the motion failed due to a lack of majority with J. Waak, D. Schneider, & E. Zabel voting in favor and J. Bilka, Ald. Sladky, and T. Dirkman voting against. The items will now be forwarded to the Streets & Sanitation Committee.

Discussion & possible action on new policies from Operations Manager

K. Glaeser passed out a draft of a letter to be sent to the local funeral homes. Included in the letter is a change to our policy of assisting the funeral homes with carrying caskets. It is being recommended that funeral homes provide pallbearers or staff to move the casket from the vehicle onto the lowering device. T. Dirkman said his company does not allow staff to assist due to the liability. He asked if the cemetery has a "truck" to move the casket over the grass if there is no family or if the casket is coming from an out of town funeral home. D. Schneider said that the cemetery provides a service. T. Dirkman said that there is no good answer to this except to provide a piece of equipment that helps the funeral homes roll the casket over to the lowering device. He suggested the idea of getting the funeral homes to chip in for the equipment, which probably costs around \$1000. In winter, extra care would be needed to clean the gravesite of snow, because it does not roll as well in winter. Ald. Sladky suggested sending this letter to the City Attorney. He said that maybe we need to charge a fee for providing pallbearers. K. Glaeser said he just doesn't have the staff to provide this service anymore.

The final item on the letter indicates that the cemetery will no longer accept fetus burials for burial in the free area of section L unless we have a signed Fetus Burial Permission Form by the time the fetus is brought to the cemetery.

Ald. Sladky made a motion to send the letter as written. T. Dirkman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion of ideas to market the cemetery or increase profits

T. Dirkman said the best way to increase revenue is to sell things pre-need, such as by hiring a salesperson who works on commission.

K. Glaeser said that he is working on getting the silo removed in the “new” cemetery. He said that the ceiling is cracked and about to come down. K. Glaeser stated that he is looking into having a farmer cut and bale the grass there and then sell the bales. E. Zabel is in support of that idea. Ald. Sladky questioned if letting the grass grow so high was in violation of the City’s weed ordinance.

T. Dirkman made a motion to adjourn the meeting. D. Schneider seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 5:55 P.M.

smsr