

Town of Calais Cemetery Commission

April 27, 2022 7-9 P.M.

Meeting Minutes

Commission Members Present: Juanita Nunn; Laura Dailey; Sherri Fitch; Michael Fullerton; Joe Mangan-Sexton

Not in attendance: Randy Koch

Member of the Public: Kiara Mangan; Donna Fitch; Don Hawkins-Bliss Trust

Juanita Nunn called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

Adjustments to Agenda: None

Introductions: New Member Sherri Fitch attended her first meeting on the commission. Michael Fullerton came to be considered for appointment.

Appoint Commissioner for Vacancy: The members present discussed appointment of Michael Fullerton. Laura Dailey made a motion to appoint Michael as a commissioner to serve out the remaining one-year on John McCullough's term. Motion approved, effective immediately.

Elect Officers: After discussion, the board determined that Juanita Nunn will serve as the Chairperson; Randy Koch (pending acceptance) will serve as Vice Chairperson; Laura Dailey will serve as Secretary.

Approve Minutes of November 17, 2021 Meeting: Minutes Approved with a correction to number of stones repaired in Sexton's report.

Approve and Sign Invoices in Timely Manner: The board discussed timelines and availability of the office and commissioners. With meeting's resuming in person, it should be less of an issue. Juanita will follow up with the Clerk's office to be sure signing monthly is acceptable.

Bliss Trust Update with Don Hawkins: Don came before the board to resume the discussion about mowing the Bliss section of the cemetery managed by the trust. There was previous discussion of a monetary figure that would be amicable for both the trust and town. The town had sent a letter to the trust billing for approximately 16 mows, which was an estimated \$7,000. After discussion, Don and other trust members offered a \$2,500 check for past mowing, as it was understood previously that it was included. Don advised that due to the structure of the trust, the judge makes the final approval before funds are dispersed. The commission tabled the issue for further discussion and would like Randy to be included.

Sexton's Report: Joe Mangan came before the board. He advised there is a tree in Robinson Cemetery and another in Fairview that need to come down. This is not a service he can do; however, Jeremy Haggett has quoted \$1,500 per tree. There were other suggestions of places to call for quotes, including Bayne's Tree Service, which is local to Calais, and Sylvan Tree Service from Marshfield. Joe will make contact and request quotes.

Joe advised the flags have been placed for memorial weekend already, and cemeteries will be opened next week for the season.

Follow up discussion on Peg Tasse's request for a bench, as well as Paul Hannon's. Chris Miller will also be coming forward with a request. There is no new information. We expect further progress later this season.

Proposed Revisions to Rules and Regulations: Joe previously provided some suggestions to the board in the form of a document, based on other towns rules and regulations. He advised that though lengthy, they cover all the potential questions that could arise, and guarantee uniform rules across the sites. The commission could give a copy to new plot buyers and review specific requests as they come. Juanita will forward the document to other members for review.

Old West Church and Robinson Fences: Juanita and Joe gave a synopsis of events to this point, indicating that the decisions to replace these fences is a joint decision due to both cemeteries being in the Historic District so there are special rules we must consider.

The grant requests for these projects were approved in the amount of \$10,000 each. Donna Fitch advised that the Old West Church had voted to assist with funding for this project, and John McCullough offered to draw plans and guide us through the process. He can aid in getting prices and explaining the proposed resolutions, including anchored wood fence. There was discussion about who would do the work, whether it would be hired out or performed by volunteers.

There was also discussion about who owned the cemetery, the town, or the Old West Church. No action taken.

Cemetery Fund Report: There was no report available by meeting time.

Taking Money from Endowment: It was previously recommended that we apply to take 4% from the endowment for this year. Juanita will speak to Sandra, the treasurer, about doing this before she leaves.

Plot Price: A non-resident requested a 4-person plot at Poplar Hill and asked that they get resident price due to long term family ties to Calais and being a former resident now in Plainfield. Many of their family have been put to rest here. Joe advised a similar request came last year and he thought it was non-negotiable, so the person paid full price. State statutes were discussed, as well as the possibility of a discount for former residents or families of Calais, as well as access for less-fortunate residents to be considered for burial in town and how to make that happen. Juanita thought there may have been a donated site for someone less fortunate that she had come across, and she will investigate that. The board decided to table the issue for further discussion and a potential vote at the next meeting.

Creating an Informational Packet for New Members: Juanita suggested that the board compile useful information for new members to better orient themselves. There is information from VLCT with rules and responsibilities for commissioners, , as well as the document called "Dig Deep." Capitol Copy could print off binders if they were put together. Members asked if maps and a list of cemeteries could be included. Juanita will look further into the details.

Joe mentioned that there were updates needed to the maps, and Juanita mentioned that the town had purchased the cemetery management module. Joe advised that Jeremy has handled that for current and future updates, but there is much historical data entry still needed. Laura volunteered to help Juanita with this process going forward.

There was discussion of setting aside plots for indigent persons to apply as written in State Statutes.

Poplar Hill Erosion Issue: Joe advised the issue doesn't seem to have worsened, but with a good storm it easily could. Juanita advised that the town purchased a membership to the Vermont Old Cemeteries Association (VOCA), and they may have some ideas on grant opportunities to help fund the repairs. The board will continue the discussion and contact organizations and associations that may be aware of additional funds.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be held in-person at the Calais Town Hall, on 05/22/2022, from 7-9 p.m.

Motion to Adjourn: Juanita made a motion to adjourn. Motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Approved by:

<u>Unapproved</u>	<u>N/A</u>
Signed/date (Chair)	Signed/date (Vice Chair)
Signed/date (Secretary)	Signed/date (Commissioner)
Signed/date (Commissioner)	