

Missoula Cemetery Board Meeting
Thursday, December 7, 2017
12:00pm
Missoula City Cemetery Office

Minutes

Present: Kim Seeberger, Paul Filicetti, Mary Lou Cordis, Susan Aaberg (City Attorney), Rick Evans (Garden City Funeral Home), Tyson Moore (Garden City Funeral Home), Bob and Michelle Jordan (Garden City Monument Services), Jesse Ramos (City Councilman elect), Ron Regan, Mary Ellen Stubb

Absent: Pat McHugh

Approval of board minutes: November 2017 unanimously approved as submitted.

Public comment. Mr. Moore questioned why they were not notified of a January 1st cemetery engraving item on City Council agenda. Mr. Moore and Mr. Evans said they would both be attending that meeting and publicly objecting to further cemetery services. The cemetery is unaware of the item but will follow up on it. Mr. Moore then thanked the board subcommittee for hammering things out and said he has seen pro-active policy changes since that meeting.

Mr. Evans praised Mr. Regan on the recent casket disinterment. Mr. Evans was disappointed the media did not publicly recognize the amount of work done by the cemetery or funeral home for this disinterment. He wanted everyone to know that without the cemetery excavating the grave a day in advance and cemetery staff spending hours hand digging around the liner to relieve soil pressure, there would have been a lot of problems. Mr. Regan thanked Mr. Evans for the speed of processing the remains which allowed the casket to be returned to the grave the same day it was disinterred.

Mrs. Jordan asked why her request to be placed onto the agenda was denied. Ms. Aaberg clarified that only board members can put items on the agenda. This is the same process as for City Council. If comments relate to an item already on the agenda, then the public is free to comment during public comment or during the item discussion.

Mr. Ramos was interested in the board vacancy and asked how he could apply. Ms. Aaberg noted he is ineligible as a Council person. Cemetery ordinance reads that board members are appointed by the Mayor and must be approved by Council. Mr. Regan added that city workers are also ineligible for board appointment because it is viewed as a conflict of interest. Eligibility information is on the cemetery website.

Financials. Revenues and expenditures were reviewed. The fund reserve name needs corrected to Cemetery Capital Reserve Fund. Discussion followed.

New or Continuing Items.

MOWER. The cemetery needs to replace three mowers that are each 15-17 years old. These mowers were discontinued eight years ago and parts are no longer available. Staff has been fabricating parts to keep the mowers going, but parts wearing out now cannot be fabricated. Old mowers could be traded in or kept for salvaging parts for the other mowers. Revenue will only support replacing one mower at a time. The process to replace a mower is to prepare the specs, place them out to bid, bring a recommendation to the board for approval, and then City Council approves spending the money.

SHOP HEATERS. Same bid process as the mowers. The old heaters are not efficient. Heating the shop with the current heaters would run about a \$1,000 a month. The shop currently heats by wood. Replacing the shop heaters brings the cemetery into compliance with air quality control standards. Both the mower and heaters were included in the CIP requests during budget time.

SILVER PARK IRON STORAGE. Mr. Filicetti met with MRA and the Public Art Committee. Ellen Buchanan (MRA) says ownership of this metal is in question. Peter Lambros (Public Art Committee) was unaware of the metal so he was unable to give direction or know future plans for it. Cemetery board concern is that if the metal is abandoned by these other groups, then the time and materials required by the cemetery to haul the items to recycling may cost more than the metal is worth. Mr. Filicetti will continue to reach out to the groups. Board consensus was that the metal and costs involved to remove it belong to these other groups. The cemetery is not responsible for the cost of hauling it away. Ms. Aaberg will also follow up on this.

BOARD BY-LAWS. Ms. Aaberg provided a draft. The only by-laws on record for the cemetery are dated 1901. The draft will be updated with current ordinance language and a few minor edits. Mrs. Seeberger requested that meeting format follow our current agenda setup. She did not see a need for board definitions and asked that the Article II language read the same as our current ordinance. Mr. Filicetti suggested written ballot language be removed. Discussion followed on the annual rotation of the Chair position.

Much discussion followed on language the removal of board members due to absences. Ms. Aaberg explained that this language came from the Board of Adjustment by-laws. Since Board members are appointed by Mayor and Council, then rescinding an appointment would be through Council action. Mr. Filicetti questioned missed versus excused absences. Ms. Aaberg said the Board could adjust language however they wish. Mrs. Seeberger stated this is not an issue when there is a full board but when the board is down members like now, then it falls onto three people to meet the quorum. She asked who enforces this. Ms. Aaberg said the board or cemetery staff would contact the Mayor and state that an individual continues to miss meetings which prevents a meeting by quorum so that individual needs replaced. New language can include how to address this issue. Ms. Aaberg will also add language for members wishing to renew their terms, but there is no limit to how long a member can serve on a board.

Mrs. Seeberger asked what would happen to a current board member who is regularly absent from meetings should this language be adopted. Ms. Aaberg noted this was a way to deal with absences but is not mandatory. Someone would have to say it is a problem, put that in writing, and give it to the Mayor. At some point, the board will want to have a process in place to deal with this situation. Ms. Aaberg will make these changes and any others that the board may wish as they review this document.

SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT. Mr. Filicetti was pleased with the progress made at the meeting. There was a lot of great discussion that went on at the meeting. He commended Mrs. Stubb for how well the minutes had been written, calling out the agreements of all parties in the last sentence under each topic. At the end of that meeting, vases and second interment rights were still areas for review. Mr. Regan noted that second interment rights are in the ordinance and have nothing to do with policy. He added that Mr. Evans made that comment for future discussion which is why it was included in the minutes. **MOTION: Mr. Filicetti moved to approve and enter the sub-committee minutes into record. Mrs. Cordis seconded. Ayes three, Absent one.**

POLICY APPROVALS. Mrs. Seeberger read the following statement and asked it be entered into record in the cemetery minutes.

We, as the City Cemetery Board, would like to thank all parties for their concerns and insight on issues brought to the Board's attention. We have listened to what everyone has to say, have gone through the due process, and had even formed a sub-committee to work through the concerns. The changes that are being made at the cemetery are what the Board wants. We would also like to state that we trust our staff and are comfortable that they will carry out these changes. We now need to move on so that the staff may do what needs to be done to successfully carry out the operations of the cemetery. I would also like it noted that the issues we have dealt with are not solely happening here. We received calls and emails from other cemeteries, such as Forestvale Cemetery in Helena, having like situations. I feel we as a board have done the steps necessary to resolve the concerns brought before us.

Mr. Filicetti echoed that statement and added that everyone here has gone through a lot of policy changes that were a little difficult at times but he thanked everyone for working through it. The changes agreed upon during the subcommittee meeting were reflected on the new forms. The Municipal Code reference was at the top of each form and blue underlines are links that will be convenient for all users. The original size and permit forms were combined onto one sheet. Variances were self-explanatory.

Mr. Filicetti noted that he and Mrs. Seeberger reviewed vases, wet sets, and the check-in policies with staff before finalizing them. Everyone agreed on the revised vase policy. The meaning of wet sets was clarified. Mr. Filicetti noted that checking in at the cemetery office covers the staff ability to document modifications or changes made to monuments and graves on the cemetery grounds. This gives an opportunity to track those changes and to make sure records are updated.

Public comment: Mrs. Jordan understands the need to notify the cemetery when a monument is picked up, however, she questioned if they had to stop at the office every time they do a stone rubbing or take a photo. Mr. Filicetti re-stated that the check-in policy was required only for modification issues. **Mrs. Cordis moved to accept all policies as written. Mr. Filicetti seconded. Ayes, three. Absent, one.**

MASTER PLAN. Discussion was postponed until Ms. Aaberg has time to look into this. Mr. Filicetti suggested the cemetery consult MRA to possibly provide financial aid in the potential hiring of a consultant to do the master plan. Mr. Regan suggested checking into resources within city departments first. Folks in engineering may be able to help with designing a master plan. The cemetery does have a master plan that includes a design for the pit area. The Cemetery Board approved that plan many years ago but never presented it to Council for their approval. So, the plan is null and void. Now things are changing with talks about housing development and a land swap for the cemetery. Dale Bickell says the master plan needs to cover improvements to the manual irrigation, upgrades to the cemetery, and plan an office and shop that benefits the cemetery. Mr. Regan knows an updated master plan is needed, but stated that revenue does not support hiring a consultant. He volunteered to look internally at city options as a way to save money on this project.

Informational Items.

BOARD VACANCY. There was much discussion on the length of time this position has remained vacant and the requirements for filling the position. Discussion then focused on past history when both City and County governments provided funding for the cemetery and had representatives on the board. This may be something the board researches further.

CIVIL WAR STONE CLEANING. There has been no further communication from Sam Dolan. Ms. Aaberg is in possession of all GAR cemetery research. She will contact Mr. Dolan to see if he still wants to pursue this project.

NEW STAFF. (Item not on the agenda.) Angela Reichert starts on Monday as the new Administrative Assistant. She has a passion for cemeteries and should be a great addition to our staff.

Adjournment at 1:15pm. Next meeting will be January 4, 2018.

Respectfully submitted by Mary Ellen Stubb