

Missoula Cemetery Board Meeting
Thursday, June 7, 2018
12:00pm
Missoula City Cemetery Office

Minutes

1. **Call to Order:** 12:02 pm called to order.

2. **Roll Call**

Board members present: Kim Seeberger, Paul Filicetti, Neil Carson

Board members absent: Mary Lou Cordis, Pat McHugh

Staff: Ron Regan, Mary Ellen Stubb, Angela Reichert, Gwen Jones

Public: Bob Jordon, Michelle Jordan

3. **Approval of Minutes-** May 2018 unanimously approved with submitted corrections.

4. **Public Comment on items not listed on the agenda-**Mrs. Seeberger stated the board meetings will adhere to the agenda. The public has three minutes to make comments on non-agenda items. No other comments are allowed unless an item is being voted on.

Mr. Jordan inquired if the cemetery is asking people to sign a survey okaying monument sales. Mrs. Seeberger stated that the board is not doing a back and forth on public comment. Mr. Jordan expressed concern about the cemetery survey. He stated families are complaining to them that the survey is one-sided and that it says the cemetery should be selling monuments. These families are unhappy about coming to the cemetery to visit loved ones and having to fill out a form to something they oppose. Ms. Jones stated that she would be happy to speak with Mr. Jordan after the meeting regarding this.

Mr. Jordan stated that 6 inch pillow markers by standard are 6 inches on the back with a 2 inch taper so that it tapers to 4 inches in front. This is what we agreed to with Ron that was acceptable and would clear the mowing deck. We have been doing this since flat markers had to be flush with the ground. Mr. Jordan stated he would like to visit with Mr. Regan later about this issue.

5. **Staff Report-** Mr. Regan reported on the status of the mower bid. The mower bid has been referred to the Public Works committee on June 13th. He stated the shop heater bid proposals went out and are to be returned by June 29th and then will be referred to City Council. The heaters will be radiant heat and replace the inefficient gas heaters and the wood stove.

Mr. Regan responded to public comment and stated that when the ordinance was passed last year, the height had to be more than 6 inches and no more than 36 inches. Slants were taken out many years ago. If we didn't catch one then that is on us but everything now must be according to ordinance with a minimum 6 inch height. Mr. Filicetti confirmed the minimum height allowed is 6 inches.

Memorial Day: Mrs. Stubb reported on the flower box theft at the cemetery. The cemetery filed a police report. The board inquired if the boxes were just moved or actually stolen. Mr. Regan confirmed they were stolen. Mrs. Stubb explained that people pay a fee to Caras Nursery and to the cemetery for these boxes. The boxes were delivered May 24, watered May 26, and by Monday they began disappearing. A total of

ten boxes were stolen over the course of that week. This has never happened at the cemetery before. Mr. Regan stated that the Police Department was doing more after hour patrols in the cemetery after staff is gone. People can load the boxes up and they're gone and he noted there has been a lot of flower theft this year as well. Cemetery staff can't question people about removing flowers but box removals would be easy to see. The flower box theft is well over \$1,000 in value.

Monument Cleaning/In-house repairs: Mrs. Reichert reported the cemetery received 16 cleaning requests and 10 of those quotes have been paid and completed. The majority of cleaning requests occurred between March and April. The cemetery is promoting the service on the website. The cemetery has received positive feedback from completed cleanings. Revenue for March, April, May was \$565. The cemetery has been completing repairs on neglected historic monuments with no legal heirs known. 22 of the 34 on the repair list have been completed. The issues are large leaning monuments, broken headstones, pillar headstones propped up with river rock, monuments completely off of hearths and on ground. The annual Stories and Stones event has many people wandering the cemetery. Repairing the stones allows for continued enjoyment of the stones and keeping the public safe.

A detailed staff report was given to the board. Discussion followed:

Monument Report as of May 31, 2018-see attached detailed report. After reviewing the report, Mr. Filicetti stated that he had an idea that 75% was not exactly true.

Working through Communication Glitches-see attached detailed report. There were no additional comments.

Addressing Public Comments from Previous Board Meetings- see attached detailed report. Mrs. Stubb noted that at the last board meeting there were a couple of statements board members asked us to address. One was the cemetery calling families to say it was set. Mrs. Stubb emphasized that we all have responsibilities to our families. After reviewing the report, Mr. Filicetti stated that he respects the monument companies but also the cemetery clients, but no one is mutually exclusive which was the statement made at the time.

Key Cemetery Information when Scheduling Interments- see attached detailed report. Mrs. Stubb noted that another item the board asked us to address from public comment was interment scheduling. Adding additional information to the report, Mr. Regan added that when office staff gives the time that the cemetery can do an interment to a funeral home, there should not be a pushback. Then he gets a call, where he tells them the same thing. They need to respect what the staff is telling them because the staff knows the cemetery's schedule. When staff offers a 10 or 10:30 time, or another day, they are not respected. The staff is walking on eggshells as they do not know what to do. Mr. Regan gave the example that when you call your dentist you don't dictate the time. The cemetery staff knows the cemetery schedule and needs, but are not being respected with the times that are given.

Next, Mrs. Stubb addressed a few specific situations from public comment that the cemetery was asked to address.

Double Interment- see attached detailed report. There were no additional comments.

Thomas- see attached detailed report. Mr. Filicetti stated he recalled a public comment blaming the director for being antagonistic. See staff report for clarification. Mr. Regan stated that there was a misunderstanding about scheduling the interment. Mr. Thomas and family were very emotional over the miscommunication. Mr. Thomas did go to the mayor's office and launched a concern and wanted Mr. Regan to call for an apology to the family. Mr. Regan stated he did call and apologize. Mr. Thomas was thankful for the call.

Graham-see attached detailed report. Mrs. Stubb explained that the issue here was that the recent request from the funeral home for burial and monument placement were totally different from the written directives the family put on file with the cemetery in 2015. A copy of the letter sent to the funeral home in 2015 is attached to the report but was never signed. During review of the report by Mrs. Stubb, Mr. Regan clarified that the reason the cemetery was not going to charge a fee to relocate the veteran monument to the center of his grave below the double monument was because the cemetery did not have a fee. Mr. Moore called the cemetery and stated the family wanted the double monument placed before Audrey Graham's death and it was urgent to get it done. When the children came to the cemetery the daughter was very apologetic but stated that her mom's wishes had changed. She asked what they needed to do to update the paperwork. The family informed the cemetery that the rush to place the stone was an idea but not necessary. Their mother's death was imminent and it was just an idea. The cemetery staff worked with this family after hours to create the forms as the family was directing. The family took the forms and had their mother sign them. The family and funeral home made the decision that the monument would be delivered to Sunset and held until the interments took place.

Veteran's Administration Rules-see attached detailed report. Mrs. Stubb called the VA to get clarification on memorial veteran markers and cemetery responsibilities on the VA monument request form. The cemetery has signed these forms for the monument company, however, the funeral homes rarely bring those forms for the cemetery to sign. The VA noted their concern, and wanted the cemetery to know that we have the responsibility to sign these forms.

6. Financials-Revenues and Expenditures were reviewed with discussion.

7. New Business

Email communications- Mrs. Seeberger proposed that due to miscommunications and to make sure everyone is on the same page that the cemetery follow up interment requests with emails. The board discussed this at length. Mr. Regan stated he wasn't sure what the board was looking for because things change and interments don't happen with one conversation. Mrs. Seeberger also noted that interment arrangements can still be made by phone but followed up with an email of 'per our discussion this is what was agreed upon' to confirm. Cemetery staff currently does this with monuments but will now use email follow up communications for interments as well. Mr. Regan re-stated that the interment time cemetery staff gives out needs to be respected. There are six days of the week available for interments. Of the 46 funerals this year, two were at the same time. There was one with the funeral home, and the other one conflicted with a private family. He stated he told the Thomas funeral if they chose the 2:30 timeslot and went over, the cemetery wouldn't charge overtime. The ordinance says to charge over time, but if it is just ten to fifteen minutes there is no charge. But if it goes to 5 or 5:30 then there is a charge. Mrs. Jordan interjected that emails work well and she goes back to them as a reference. Ms. Jones suggested that due to the length of the staff report, email communications are a place to start and then be revisited.

8. Continuing Business

a. Photography / Filming Policy- The policy draft was discussed. Ms. Jones suggested the board write their intention and then use discretion in applying the policy. It was determined that student assignments, individual personal photos/film, or newsworthy events do not need to complete a request. However, projects by commercial companies with the intent of using their filming in a professional production will be required to submit a request for approval along with providing required licensing and insurance. The board also extended the 30 day deadline to 60 days to allow

time for board review. Cemetery staff was directed to update the policy for final review at the next board meeting.

- b. **Master plan-** Mrs. Seeberger thanked Mr. Filicetti on his photos and ideas for the master plan. Mr. Filicetti apologized to Mr. Regan on the number of photos that may have made the cemetery look bad. Mr. Regan stated that he was taken aback at first, but then understood that the point of the photos was to show what issues need to be addressed at the cemetery. Mrs. Seeberger noted that the photos emphasized the areas the Board wanted to address. Mrs. Seeberger stated she wanted to look at other opportunities to enhance services to benefit the families of the deceased such as clearing a path to the graves in winter or pictures of flower boxes for out of town families. Mr. Regan stated that the staff already clears snow for the public but it is not publicized, and staff takes pictures of flowers upon request.

Mr. Filicetti suggested using some of the cemetery survey comments to create a list of goals for what the board hopes to achieve and eventually bring before City Council. Mrs. Seeberger asked Ms. Jones what the process was. Ms. Jones responded it was her first master plan and she would have to make some inquiries and help the board write the referral. She noted that the information that the board has compiled is great and the board needs to clarify the goals and what they hope to get out of a master plan.

Mrs. Seeberger found interesting the photos Mr. Filicetti took referring to ADA compliance and bringing it up to code. Mr. Filicetti responded that this is due to an aging population. Mr. Filicetti noted to Mr. Regan that this was no reflection on him but it is the infrastructure here at the cemetery. Mr. Regan stated he did have to take a breath, but he knew it was a process. Mr. Filicetti noted that the conditions of the staff having to heat up food in the shop for lunch is unacceptable. There needs to be a designated space for that. He stated that is just an example of work environment things that need to be met. The board's big overarching goal is public safety. When it comes to the master plan it is safety for the people coming here and their safety. Mr. Filicetti also commented on where the board was meeting and that by modern standards if there was a fire, this room is wrong. Mr. Regan stated that if a person comes into the office in a wheelchair, staff can assist them. But the restrooms are kind of wheelchair accessible but do not have handles. Mr. Filicetti found it interesting that a wheelchair could get into the Veteran Memorial but might have difficulty getting out, which is not acceptable.

Mr. Regan stated that when the referral is put together its good not to forget the whys and what fors. Ms. Jones admired the amount of work the board has already put into the master plan. She asked to have an email sent to her that states the cemetery is gathering information to start broaching the subject of a master plan. Mrs. Seeberger stated that the master plan is a huge project and the board wants to do it right instead of back tracking. Ms. Jones also noted that a master plan should not be done on a whim because it will take a lot of time and money to achieve.

- 9. **Informational Items-**Mr. Regan added an additional staff report item. He met with Mr. Bickel regarding the possibility of including cemetery fees on a list of city fees that regularly increase by a small percentage. This was discussed a year and a half ago, but started again when the new walls were purchased. Percentage increase examples were given to board members. Cemetery fees last increased in 2015 by a big jump. Board members liked the idea of gradually increasing the fees 2-2 1/2% every year rather than, large increases every three years or so. Ms. Jones inquired about the fee schedule passed last fall. Mr. Regan clarified that the only changes were to add the new services and reduce the liners. Mrs. Stubb stated the

current fees have been in effect since 2015. Ms. Jones then understood changes were made but the need now is to make continued incremental increases.

10. Communication- Mrs. Stubb shared a letter from Mr. and Mrs. Cyr that was also sent to the Mayor.

May 18, 2018

*Mayor John Engen
435 Ryman
Missoula, MT 59802*

Dear Mayor Engen,

I'm writing this letter to let you know how pleased my husband and I are with the Missoula City Cemetery Manager, Ron Regan, and staff. Just driving through the Cemetery is always heartwarming and joyful to see a well-groomed and beautiful environment where our precious family and friends reside. The lawn is always well manicured and flower beds look great. We recently had our headstones cleaned for the very first time. They did a marvelous job. The staff is always so pleasant, presentable and helpful whenever needed. Missoula can be mighty proud of this beautiful establishment called the Missoula City Cemetery. No matter the season or the reason, the Cemetery is a lovely place to visit. We definitely highly recommend it. I would also like to compliment the cleanliness and well-kept restrooms for both WOMEN and MEN. That is a great public service.

In closing, we are hopeful that Ron Regan and his office employees will be working and available for many more years.

Thank you,

*James O. and Loretta Cyr
Citizens and Taxpayers of Missoula County*

11. Adjournment at 1:28 pm

Respectfully submitted by Angela Reichert

Detailed Staff Report

Monument Report as of May 31, 2018

In meeting discussions: Companies said 75% of their monument sales are done in April/May.

Cemetery records show 4-yr. avg. for stones set: 46 per fiscal year 18 in April and May

Actual stones set for fiscal year 2017-2018: 35 for fiscal year 8 in April and May

Cemetery began setting all monuments after November 1, 2017. All monuments were set in a timely fashion and families notified upon completion.

Working through communication glitches:

- **Delivery notice**
 - **Scheduling:** Still working on the routine of calling in advance to schedule deliveries.
 - **Examples:**
 - 5:23pm email sent to cemetery re: delivery of 5 monuments at 9am next morning.
Solution: Cemetery called after 8am to set scheduled delivery at 10:30am.
 - Rejected monument was returned 1 hour later with no notice.
 - **Solution:** Cemetery made staff available to check-in monument. Staff may not always be available which is why advance notice is requested before delivering monuments.
- **Special requests**
 - **Example:** At delivery, it was requested the stone be set within 2 business days.
 - **Solution:** Cemetery set the monument the next day and then followed with an email to the company asking that they communicate special requests to the cemetery in advance of delivery. Cemetery will do our best to meet a request but cannot make guarantees.
- **Cemetery rules**
 - **Example:** Calling on behalf of family regarding cemetery flower rules.
 - **Solution:** Cemetery requests that families are sent to the cemetery. That allows cemetery staff to hand out written information to families and answer any further questions they may have.

Addressing public comments from previous board meetings:

- **Cemetery communication with families.** Cemetery maintains open communication with both families and businesses throughout the monument setting process per the monument policy. This was agreed upon by the cemetery board, cemetery staff, funeral homes, and monument company in November 2017.
- **Cemetery is not contracted to install monuments.** Installation is done following cemetery ordinance found in Municipal Code Chapter 12.44.

Key cemetery information when scheduling interments:

- **Interments come from:** Missoula funeral homes, private families, and other funeral homes both in and out of the state
- **When scheduling multiple interments on the same day:** The cemetery must consider: location, timing, respect for family privacy, and traffic congestion.
- **Additional interment requests:** Funeral homes do not pay attention to services already on the cemetery calendar. Instead, cemetery staff receives pushback when alternatives times are suggested. The cemetery treats all families with the highest respect and everyone needs treated equally.

Double Interment

- 3/27 – Garden City Funeral Home scheduled interment at 11am (Hinman) with reception before interment.
- 4/02 – Garden City Funeral Home requested a second interment at 11am (Byrne) reception after interment.
- **ISSUE:** Both interments were caskets, only 50 feet apart, and requested at the same time.
- Cemetery staff informed the funeral home of the conflict and suggested a time later in the afternoon or the next day. However, the cemetery was told that the church service was already scheduled.
- Cemetery schedule and staff suggestions were disregarded by the funeral home.
- Mr. Evans called the cemetery director. Services and receptions were already scheduled and could not be changed. Mr. Regan noted the services were too close together in location and one should be moved to another time.
- Mr. Regan agreed to the time change long as the funeral home controlled the situation so both families did not all arrive at the same time.
- On the morning of the services, Mr. Evans called and said the Byrne service was moved to 10:30am to give space between the families.

Thomas

- 4/03 – Private family scheduled an interment at 1pm (Gallagher)
- 4/11 – Garden City Funeral Home called to schedule an interment at 1pm (Thomas)
- **ISSUE:** Both interments were requested at the same time. A private family was already on the cemetery calendar. Mr. Moore asked about a late afternoon time and said this interment could possibly be pushed to the next day.
- Also, this family did not have a grave and needed to come to the cemetery to choose a location before an interment could be scheduled with the cemetery.
- **Solution:** Mrs. Reichert conveyed the original request to Mr. Regan, who suggested interment options of 10:30am or 2:30pm.
- When that information was relayed to Mr. Moore, he informed the cemetery that the next day would not be an option and stated the family was on their way to the cemetery to choose a grave and talk about the time for the interment.
- When the family came to choose a grave, they were under the understanding that they could not schedule a morning service.

- Mr. Regan gave them the same 10:30am or 2:30pm options as had previously been relayed to Mr. Moore.
- Mr. Thomas was not happy with the conflicting information the family was receiving. Later, Mr. Thomas filed a complaint with the Mayor's office.
- Mr. Regan contacted Mr. Thomas regarding the misunderstanding.
- Mr. Thomas was thankful for the call back and conveyed to Mr. Regan that they chose this cemetery because of the beauty and how well it was maintained. Mr. Thomas also stated that he shut down negative information regarding this cemetery that was being conveyed to him by the funeral home.

Graham

- **2015** - Cemetery staff worked closely with Wayne Benson (Garden City Funeral Home) to help a family with a vet marker & written directives for future interments.
- **Instructions:** 7/09 - The family gave written directive to the cemetery that Audrey & Elmer Graham were to go into separate graves, a double monument would be placed centered across the two graves, and the double monument would not be set until after Audrey's death.
- The family also informed us that Elmer's body was sent to science and as soon as it returned, his remains would be interred into the grave.
- **Request:** 10/5 - The funeral home requested a variance to place Elmer's vet marker inset into the grave so that when the double monument was placed, the vet marker would not need moved.
- **Decision:** After consulting with the cemetery board, it was determined that the variance would not be allowed based on the concern of cemetery experience that 'directives could change' in the future. The vet marker was to be placed in the grave headspace following cemetery protocol, however, when the double monument was set, the cemetery would move and level the vet marker into its proper place in front of the double monument at no charge to the family.
- This letter was never signed by the funeral home because the family decided to place the vet marker in the headspace on their own.
- **5/2016** - The vet marker was placed on Elmer's grave. The cemetery was under the impression that the remains would be returned relatively soon now that the vet marker was placed.
- **2018** – 3/28 - Cemetery receives a pre-verification for placement of a monument for Audrey & Elmer. The placement requested the monument be set onto one grave, not two, and Vanessa (Garden City Funeral Director) stated the veteran marker was on the wrong grave and would need moved.
- Angela checked cemetery records. She informed Vanessa that an interment date was required before placing the monument and that this request did not match written directives on file at the cemetery so, therefore, we could not proceed. Since Mary Ellen had written all the notes on this but she was not in the office on this day, Angela suggested this wait until Mary Ellen returned.
- 4/04 – Mary Ellen reviewed the documents and contacted Wayne because they both had worked extensively with the family in 2015. Wayne remembered the situation well and requested to be contacted if current requests changed from the 2015 written documentation.
- Vanessa stated that Tyson was in charge of this monument and Wayne has nothing to do with this order. She questioned why the cemetery would not allow the monument on the one grave with Elmer's death dates when a veteran marker was already on the cemetery grounds with the information.

- Mary Ellen explained that the family needed to contact the cemetery to update written directives if their wishes had changed. We could not proceed without that. As for the request to place a new monument with Elmer's death dates, that request cannot be granted without scheduling Elmer's interment.
- Tyson disagreed with the cemetery's denial of the new monument. He stated the family wanted this done so Audrey could see it before her death.
- 4/06 – Audrey's children, Rick Braddock and Karen Reno, came to the cemetery. Karen had helped Audrey with the original written directives, so she was very aware that the original plans had changed. They both fully understood the need to update the written directives. They stated the rush to place the monument was a nice idea but was not necessary. Ron, Angela, and Mary Ellen stayed after hours to assist them with each directive for Audrey to sign.
- At this time, the family informed the cemetery that Tyson had ordered the stone a few weeks ago. Ron informed them that Tyson did not have an approval on the pre-verification and should not have ordered the stone yet.
- The family believed Elmer's remains would be returned to them sometime in June when school was out, but they were not certain of exactly when his remains would be returned to them.
- Cemetery staff explained that setting the stone in advance without death dates is a normal situation and no problem. But, without an interment, the monument would be a memorial for Elmer and would need to read 'In Memory Of'. The family stated that their intent was to inter Elmer's remains so they did not want a memorial. The family was going to contact Tyson to ask that Elmer's death date not be inscribed on the stone at this time. The family was very appreciative of what the cemetery does and how helpful our staff has been in meeting their wishes both in 2015 and now.
- 4/09 – Updated written directives were received, signed by Audrey. The family stated that they could not change their original monument order because Tyson informed them it would cost them an additional \$300 to inscribe Elmer's death date at a later time but they would ask Tyson to hold the monument delivery.
- The family contacted the cemetery to say that Audrey had passed. They will wait and inter Audrey and Elmer at the same time once Elmer's remains are received. Tyson will hold the monument at Sunset until that time. They again expressed their appreciation and gratitude for how the cemetery staff worked with them to grant Audrey's wishes.
- 5/22 – Memorial Monuments called to deliver the monument. Cemetery staff informed them that the monument was to be held at Sunset and they should contact Tyson. Mary Ellen also informed them that Garden City Funeral Home has not submitted the permit and fees yet, both of which were due when once the monument was sold.

Veteran administration rules:

- **Veteran has (1) benefit**
- **Remains and a grave = standard vet marker**
- **No remains and a grave = 'In Memory Of' marker**
- **Bodies sent to science = a) memorial stone or b) if intent is a future interment, then wait to order**
- **Cemetery representative responsibility is to verify the grave and the disposition of the remains**
- **Funeral directors or monument companies cannot sign for the cemetery.**