

Missoula Cemetery Board Meeting  
Thursday, April 4, 2019  
12:00pm  
Missoula City Cemetery Office

**Minutes**

**1. Call to Order**

**Board members present:** Mary Lou Cordis, Kim Seeberger, Neil Carson

**Board members absent:** Paul Filicetti, Pat McHugh

**Staff:** Ron Regan, Mary Ellen Stubb, Angela Reichert

**Public:** Tyson Moore (Garden City Funeral Home), Michelle Jordan (Garden City Monument Services)

**2. Roll Call**

**3. Approval of Minutes.** February minutes unanimously approved with correction.

**4. Public Comment on items not listed on the agenda.** None.

**5. Staff Report.** A flyer was distributed for the annual City/County Board Leadership Training.

**Information and Interpretive Signage Grant Award.** Mrs. Reichert announced that the cemetery was awarded a grant through the Montana History Foundation. We first prepared a signage proposal but the foundation wanted something more historically geared so we re-worked the proposal. The grant award of \$2,531 is for an information sign with rules / directions and interpretive signs in the historic section of the cemetery. This is an awesome service to the public and a great addition to Stories and Stones. A local signage company will do the layout from information we provide and the stands will come from a company back east who knows government entity sign dimensions. We will do the labor and some material to match the grant amount.

Board response was very positive. Mr. Carson asked about an estimated time of completion. Mrs. Reichert said the signs can be made in 10 days but she didn't remember how long it was estimated for the stands. Depending on the grounds scheduled she said hopefully this would be ready by Stories and Stones but there was no guarantee. Mr. Regan added that the signage company will do an on-site visit with us and this project was very exciting. Mrs. Reichert noted that we have to give the signage company the information, high quality pictures, and then they will design it and get it done.

**6. Financials.** Reviewed with some discussion.

**7. New Business. Equipment: Mower / Utility Cart / Hotsy.** These rolling stock items are rolling stock that was previously discussed and budgeted. **MOTION: Mr. Carson moved to approve the purchase of these equipment items out of the Cemetery Capital Reserve Fund as budgeted. Mrs. Cordis seconded. 3 ayes, 2 absent.**

**Walls.** Mr. Regan said we tried to get a second grant for a pet wall and ossuary. The Montana History Foundation wouldn't do this because it wasn't related to history. Our proposal now is to use no tax dollars or General Fund money, but to use donations from the public out of the Cemetery Memorial Fund. The cost is \$10,192 which leaves roughly \$4,417 in the fund. There would be an ossuary in the ground to pour ashes into and an inscription on the wall.

Location options within the cemetery were discussed with no decision at this time. Mrs. Stubb said

the wall would be 4'x6' and sit on top of a base. The number of names on the wall will depend on the type of font and layout we choose to use and those are discussions we will have as we go. Mr. Carson expects that in theory, the projected return on investment should be relatively short. Mr. Regan said it all depends, but this will be a revenue producer.

There was discussion on how to get the word out for this. Mr. Regan said there would be a news release but mostly we will have to rely on word of mouth the same as we do for selling graves. The Memorial Fund is only used for Stories and Stones. This is not taxpayers' money. These were donations from the public to do something in the cemetery. On our questionnaire, we had people ask for it. Mr. Carson recalled there was a fair amount of interest.

Mrs. Stubb added that our research has shown this is a fast growing trend. In the past few months alone, we have received information for numerous seminars and reports on pet cemeteries and memorials. In fact, it seems that more and more funeral homes are jumping on board to expand their cremation services to include pets.

Mr. Carson said he loved the idea. He wanted to make sure that if we make this expense there would not be a problem with funding Stories and Stones. Mr. Regan assured him there would not be an issue. Stories and Stones is covered. Mr. Carson then suggested we go for it. **MOTION: Mr. Carson moved to approve spending Memorial Fund money for the Pet Memorial Wall and Ossuary project. Mrs. Cordis seconded. 3 ayes. 2 absent.**

Public Comment on the motion: Mr. Moore (Garden City Funeral Home) asked if the cemetery had looked into the legality of this. He suggested we may want that before voting because most perpetual cemeteries cannot have pets in them. He doesn't know the answer but said that is why this has never been done before. He added that Montana Annotated Code should definitely be reviewed for the legality of pets in a human cemetery. Mr. Moore also asked if this wall had already been bid, if the cost was known, and what the public would be charged for use.

Mr. Regan said he could answer those questions now even though this was public comment time. This would definitely be researched by Ms. Aaberg in the City Attorney's Office before moving forward. We have budgetary dollars because we started with a grant and were hoping to get that. Now, we are carrying this over to use the Memorial Fund. This is something he felt would be a service to the town because there is nothing like this in Missoula. That's how this started but we will get quotes as we go.

Mr. Moore suggested the cemetery finish the columbarium plaza before starting another project because this has been in process for two years and is still not finished. **MOTION AMENDED: Mr. Carson moved to approve spending Memorial Fund money for the Pet Memorial Wall and Ossuary project dependent on the results of legal research being done. Mrs. Cordis seconded. 3 ayes, 2 absent.**

**Fees.** Mr. Regan said the cemetery has not increased fees for many years. He proposes a 4% increase every year, which would be setup through Leigh Griffing in Finance. We go ten years without an increase; the last one was about nine years ago, so it is time we set this up. This would have to go through Council for approval and then they could set it up annually. Mrs. Seeberger thought they already set that up for fee increases but Mrs. Stubb said it had only been discussed. Mr. Regan said there was not a board quorum at the meeting and then budgets were over.

Mr. Carson asked if anyone recalled what percent had been discussed. Mr. Regan said the board didn't decide but wanted him to go to Dale Bickell to see what Dale's thoughts were. Mrs. Seeberger asked if this was only for the niche walls. Mr. Regan said it would be for all fees straight across the board. He suggested we revisit this every five years. We may have to revisit this sooner because as niche wall costs go up, we need to make sure fees are covering replacement costs of the

wall and cost of the site areas to put them in.

Mrs. Seeberger proposed we put this in for review every fifth year for review. Mr. Carson said he'd like to discuss this every budget season. Mr. Regan noted that's up to us, if this is not working then it has to be taken back to Council. He doesn't have anything against reviewing it every year, but if there is not a board quorum then things don't get done and it doesn't move on. Mr. Carson clarified that he was not saying to approve increases every year, but he felt fees should be discussed every year just to see how things are going. Mr. Regan noted that Council might have a whole different twist on this than we do. This will be sent to committee and can go back and forth three or four times before it gets done. **MOTION: Mrs. Cordis moved to approve an annual 4% fee increase and have that request move through the proper channels to gain Council approval. Mr. Carson added that the Board of Trustees will conduct an annual review of this motion. Mr. Carson seconded. 3 ayes, 2 absent.**

- 8. Continuing Business. Master Plan.** Mr. Regan asked the board where we were going with this. He suggested we put together a strategic plan and an RFP then put that out to see what replies we get along with costs. Then we can make a decision from there. He feels we need to do a strategic plan for replacement of trees, irrigation, buildings, and wells. The Capital Reserve Fund is dwindling, so we need to move this forward to Council so they see what we're up against and that there's a plan in place. We need to go through the due process to show how much land the cemetery needs.

Mrs. Seeberger said she would really like Mr. Filicetti to be in on this discussion. She can see doing an RFP and getting the cost of that and the cost of having someone facilitate that but she is not sold on it as much as she was before. We know what needs done around here so there's no reason we can't put this together. We know when about trees, maintenance, and equipment. Mr. Regan said this has nothing to do with equipment; that is rolling stock. Mrs. Seeberger clarified that the Master Plan encompasses everything in the cemetery.

Mr. Regan said we need a strategic plan. Master plan was the wrong wording. A strategic plan will show how much land we need and the capital outlay of money we need in the Cemetery Reserve Fund. This shows Council and City Managers our real situation with trees and replacements. A third party is who needs to take this and present it to Council.

Mrs. Cordis said we need to get on this because the Northside is changing fast all around us and she gave examples of what's happening in her neighborhood.

Mr. Regan said he could have Jeremy Keene the new Public Works Director come to next month's board meeting to talk with the board about this. Mrs. Seeberger thought that was a great idea and asked that Mr. Regan set that up. Mr. Carson said he has lots of thoughts on this but that he would like to hear from Mr. Keene first. It was decided that if Mr. Keene is unable to make the board meeting or if budget decisions are needed before the May meeting, then a special meeting of the board could be called.

- 9. Informational Items.** Mr. Regan just received the budget manual. New requests have to be in by May 3<sup>rd</sup> so a special meeting may have to be called for new Capital Outlay requests. Rolling stock does not need approval. Mr. Carson said he had not seen the rolling stock sheet and would be interested in reviewing that. Mrs. Seeberger asked if there would be enhancements to the regular budget. Mr. Regan said yes. We will have those templates ready to go and will share them with the board at the May meeting.

Mr. Regan said he thought having Mr. Keene come talk with the board was a really good idea. He said that since this was an advisory board, any enhancements the board wants are what we need to see to work on.

**10. Communication.** Mrs. Cordis gave a brief update on past board member, Mrs. Jacobs. Mr. Regan asked board members to call in on the cemetery main line rather than to individual staff so that messages are received even if a staff person is gone.

**11. Adjournment** at 12:39pm.

Respectfully submitted by Mary Ellen Stubb, Administrative Assistant III