

Missoula Cemetery Board Meeting
Thursday, May 2, 2019
12:00pm
Missoula City Cemetery Office

Minutes

1. Call to Order

Board members present: Neil Carson, Mary Lou Cordis, Kim Seeberger, Paul Filicetti, Pat McHugh

Board members absent: None

Staff: Ron Regan, Mary Ellen Stubb, Angela Reichert, Susan Aaberg (City Attorney), Jeremy Keene (Public Works Director)

Public: Rick Evan (Garden City Funeral Home), Tyson Moore (Garden City Funeral Home)

2. Roll Call

3. Approval of Minutes. April minutes unanimously approved as submitted.

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

5. Staff Report. Mr. Regan introduced Jeremy Keene to talk about the strategic plan/master plan vision for the cemetery.

Strategic / Master Plan. Mr. Keene thanked the board for having him today and said he has been with the city since February as the Public Works Director. He is still getting his legs under him and figuring things out. He toured the cemetery last week and said this was a great facility and work operation. He has interacted with the board before when he was with WGM while working on the master plan for this whole area. He feels the cemetery is an important piece of the plan and he worked hard to respect that and serve the cemetery well within that plan. He and Mr. Regan talked about the differences between a master plan versus a strategic plan and that would look like. He advised the board to keep in mind that when creating this plan, it is important to show that this cemetery is an asset and has value to this community. Therefore, ask yourselves:

- What does this cemetery do?
- What do you want to get out of this plan?
- What do you have now?
- What do you need to think about for the future?
- What do you do in terms of maintenance? To preserve assets, there is a need for long-term capital improvements.
- What services can the cemetery provide going forward?

A strategic plan is a process to help answer those questions, engage stakeholders, provide forum discussions, allow differing opinions, and provides a good format for making informed decisions. When Council comes to making decisions about the cemetery, such as funding or future land uses, they can then make decisions based on all available information. This is a core reason for a strategic plan.

Mr. Keene is aware that the board has already had many discussions on what this plan could be. His suggestion is to start simple. Take this in steps and this process could bring out even more steps along the way such as historical designation or other pieces to help move the cemetery forward. From his perspective, this cemetery is an amazing asset that not many people are aware of, so we need to define why we have it, its connection to our history, and list the obligations that come along with it.

Mr. Keene said he would be helping to work on an RFP to hire a consultant who would facilitate this process. He thought it a good idea to have a board member or two on the selection committee. He thanked

the board for the chance to introduce himself and told them he would be happy to hear from them if they have any thoughts or questions.

Fee Increase Proposal. Mr. Regan is working with Finance on the 4% fee increase proposal. We received an email that says this should move forward in May.

Equipment. We bought a Hotsy for \$5,620 (Budget was \$10,000). Vehicle Maintenance handles Council approval for the carts and mowers from rolling stock.

Memorial Day. We are ready and expect nine monuments delivered tomorrow. Memorial Monuments had three deliveries scheduled for today but their truck broke down. Mr. Regan said that he hopes to get the big load of monuments coming in tomorrow set by Memorial Day. These companies missed the April 15 cutoff that guarantees placement by Memorial Day but that is not an excuse for us. We will try to make all of these happen. Mr. Carson thanked Mr. Regan for that commitment to the families.

Interpretive Sign Grant. Mrs. Reichert ordered six interpretive sign frames. She is working with the sign company on small edits for the rules sign, which is a simple, basic sign with the most important cemetery rules listed. Mrs. Reichert is also working on the design for the interpretive panels, obtaining copyright permission for UofM photos, and working on the histories. She will also tap into the storytellers to see what information they have as well. Mrs. Reichert feels these signs will be a great addition to the cemetery and give the public a good experience as they walk the grounds. The six interpretive signs will be for the Victorian monument, Worden, Woody, Higgins, Gleim, and our cemetery history. She is hoping to get these into production soon.

Resignation. Board members thanked Mrs. Reichert for her hard work and monthly treats. Mrs. Reichert announced she was leaving the end of May to dive back into archeology work for the Forest Service based in Hamilton. She is sad to leave but happy for this opportunity.

6. Financials. Reviewed with some discussion.

7. New Business.

Election of Officers. Mrs. Cordis said this was her last term on the board after over 40+ years. The Board voted unanimously to elect Mr. Carson as Chair and Mr. Filicetti as Vice-Chair.

FY20 Budget. General Fund budget has no changes. Mr. Regan presented the Reserve Fund budgets for board approval.

- **Niche Fund.** Recommend buying another wall for the green plaza.
- **Capital Reserve Fund.** Propose a mower, contingency, snow blower, and street repair for roads west of Russell Street (chip sealing, crack sealing, asphalt)
- **Donation Fund.** Pet memorial wall and ossuary show for Council approval. The board already approved this.

Mr. Regan noted that very little money would be left in these accounts by the end of FY20 if we made all the proposed purchases. Mr. McHugh asked if donations were for specific memorials. Mrs. Stubb said only one donation was designated for the chapel. All other donations have no restrictions.

Mr. McHugh asked what the contingency entailed. Mr. Regan said the way Finance explained this to him it is for emergency type situations (trees, irrigation, roof repairs, leaks, well goes down, etc.). Council approves this money in advance so when an emergency happens, we can move forward to fix it without the requirement of bids and approval.

Mr. Filicetti asked where the money for the RFP lays within the budget. Mr. Regan said it is a carryover of the master plan money. Mr. Filicetti noted that *master* plan needs changed to *strategic* plan in the budget.

Mr. McHugh asked for clarification that the projected revenue goal for the Niche Fund was \$8,400. Mr. Regan confirmed. Mrs. Stubb reminded board members of the revenue allocations: Niche Fund receives 100% of niche sales; Donation Fund receives 100% of donations; Capital Reserve Fund receives only 50% of remaining sales and services.

MOTION: Mr. Filicetti moved to approve all proposed budgetary expenditures from funds. Mrs. Seeberger seconded. Ayes, 5.

Stories and Stones on Sunday, September 15. Mrs. Stubb said cemetery staff is working with Jennie Pak (volunteer storyteller coordinator) on the tour. Storyteller consensus is to do away with the brunch. Mr. Seeberger stated she would still bring something because she feels it is important to thank all the staff and folks who work so hard on this event.

Mrs. Stubb said Jennie emailed another proposed change yesterday wanting to extend the tour hours to run from 11am to 3:30pm. Cemetery staff has some major concerns with this idea. Our staff met with Jennie last month to discuss ideas on how to freshen up the tour. Jennie planned to poll the storytellers for ideas and gather their feedback. She forwarded seven storyteller responses. Discontinuing the brunch seemed to be a consensus. Extending the time, however, was not. Only one storyteller was fine with that, the rest said they were at their limit with the current three hours of talking. With so few responses, Mrs. Stubb was concerned whether all the storytellers were polled or only a select few. Everyone should have a voice in these decisions.

Mrs. Stubb voiced her concern with scheduling storytellers in shifts and public response to that. She said cemetery staff would not take charge of scheduling which storytellers would be speaking at what times. Jennie Pak would have to run this and it would take some major coordination to pull it off smoothly. The cemetery plans to have laminated clock faces at each site to tell the public when a storyteller is on a break. The public, however, expects all storytellers to be here during the entire timeframe and there is great concern that we will lose our audience if we stagger storyteller in shifts. Mr. Regan agreed that if we split the tour into two shifts then we would likely lose our audience. People will not stick around if the story they want to hear is not here. Mrs. Cordis also agreed, saying that some folks come from out of town to see different stories and expect them all to be here.

Mr. Regan added that we do not know how many storytellers Jennie reached out to but we really need to get the whole picture. He suggested we maybe put this into effect next year to give us time to hear from them all of them. He laughingly said some folks who wear corsets told him in the past that they want to get out of them after a few hours.

Mr. McHugh asked if the storytellers had an organized committee that runs the group. Mrs. Stubb said no although she has suggested forming a committee numerous times over the years to Jennie. A committee would be very beneficial. Organizing the storytellers would spread out the work and a committed group would be more involved in leading the future direction of the tour. Mr. Regan added that Mrs. Stubb has strongly suggested a number of times that Jennie needs to form a committee.

Mr. Filicetti felt that splitting the time up was a valid concern. He asked about maybe looking at different dates so we are not in competition with other events such as Sunday Streets. Mr. Carson was not familiar with Sunday Streets but asked if we could collaborate on marketing for both events. Mrs. Stubb can check into that and, if it is possible, then she will run that information by legal counsel.

Mr. Filicetti suggested board members make an effort to become more of a participant in the planning process. If the storytellers did organize, then a board member should participate in that. Mr. McHugh suggested Mrs. Stubb be on the committee because she has the history of this event and drove it successfully for many years. Mrs. Stubb declined, feeling that would be a conflict. She explained that the reason behind bringing on a volunteer coordinator was to alleviate some of the work from administrative staff. If she were to get onto the committee, it would put her back into the same position she was on in the past. Because she was the driving force for so long, she would have difficulty not leading it again and she felt the storytellers would too easily slip back into depending on her to oversee it. Mr. Regan added that the tour can easily cause burnout and it needs an organized committee to spread out the work. We provide

support for the storytellers but those volunteers are the tour and should take a more active role in the planning. Mrs. Stubb said the volunteers are very dedicated to this tour, but their dedication lies in researching the story, preparing a costume, and coming here one afternoon a year. The hope would be that they form a committee and take a more active role in the future of this event.

Mrs. Stubb explained that a number of years ago when the cemetery considered stopping the tour, Jennie Pak stepped up and volunteered to organize the storytellers. Mr. Regan said that Mrs. Stubb had concerns back then and a decision was made to put this event to bed for a while. It had all ended up in her lap, which caused burnout. He sees her point with not wanting to be on the committee. He also said that one day there will be retirement, illness, or somebody moving on and one person holding all the eggs will be the end to the tour. We need to try to expand this in order to keep it going. Mr. Filicetti agreed and said maybe by this time next year; the board could insert themselves into the future planning process. Mr. Carson feels this is a great event. He asked that the board be notified of whatever is needed to keep this event going.

8. Continuing Business

Strategic Plan. Mr. Regan said Mr. Keene is all in on taking this before committee. Mr. Keene is more than willing to help, but our staff will need to put this together. We will take those packets that each of us did, compile that information, and put it into an RFP format. Then we will meet again with Mr. Keene. After that, we need a committee with a board member and outside folks who will whack, slice, and dice the proposal before it moves onto committee. The money for this is there as a placeholder, but Mr. Keene thinks it is not going to cost as much money as budgeted. He thinks a partnership will come through to help pay for this but Mr. Regan is not receiving very much information about that. Mr. Regan does think a strategic plan is a good thing to do.

Mr. Filicetti asked what the schedule was for this. Mr. Regan said Mr. Keene and Mr. Bickell want it done yesterday. Mr. Filicetti said the city is obviously then moving forward and needs this information for their plans. He would be very interested in being a part of the committee and review process. Mr. Regan said when we get to that point; we can talk further and bring the information to the board. Mr. Carson asked that we keep this as an agenda item.

Mr. Filicetti wondered that even if the Montana History Foundation (MHF) issues grants only once a year, could we submit a grant again next year. Mrs. Reichert said yes, as far as she knows we can submit a grant every year. Mrs. Stubb explained how the grant cycle works. Mr. Regan added that grant money can not be given if a project has already started, like the strategic plan.

Mr. Filicetti said he felt MHF would pay for the cemetery nomination on the historic registry and he thought that Emy (Historic Preservation Officer) would do that. Mrs. Stubb said we had already had that conversation with Emy. Emy is willing to help but it was far more work and time than she could commit. The nomination would have to be a team effort. Mr. Filicetti said that is what he does and he would be happy to help. He also thought the legislature had approved other funds and we should start looking for other grant funding sources. Mrs. Stubb asked that everyone notify staff if they find possible funding sources for cemetery projects.

9. Informational Items. Mr. Filicetti asked if the cemetery was taking steps to address flower theft this year. Mr. Regan said yes, ideas are in the works.

Mr. Filicetti felt there is a real need to reach out and recruit new candidates for board members. Mrs. Stubb noted there are no vacant positions at this time. Mrs. Cordis said she is 80 years old and willing to step down as soon as a new member is found. She stays on because she knows the history of the cemetery which she feels can be helpful.

10. Communication. None.

11. Adjournment at 12:49pm.