

Missoula Cemetery Board Meeting
Thursday, January 5, 2012
1:30pm
Ruth Bennett Memorial Chapel
Missoula Cemetery

Minutes

Present: Sharee Fraser, Carol Gordon, Doug Waters, Mary Lou Cordis, Marjorie Jacobs, Ron Regan, Mary Ellen Stubb

Absent: Pat McHugh

1. Approval of board minutes: December 2011. Mr. Waters clarified labor cost for Stories and Stones. He stated that with the fee study and price increases he felt obligated to let the board know actual costs not as a negative towards the tour but as necessary information. His calculations were made using cost calculations similar to the cost fee study. He estimated preparation time for crew and office, labor on day of the tour, and compensation benefits totaled about \$10,000. Bottom line for all labor and actual expenses place the total cost of the tour around \$15,000. Mr. Waters advised the board to be prepared for administration to eventually call this out. Mrs. Jacobs asked if the cemetery would save money by cancelling the tour. Mr. Waters said actual cost out of the department budget line items would be \$5,000 and that money could be used for maintaining the cemetery or possible office stuff instead. He said he was not suggesting the tour be cancelled but needed to accurately show the cost of doing business. Mr. Waters stated he was not being negative but he was caught off guard when questioned by Mr. Bender about labor costs from outside departments. Minutes approved with this correction.
2. Items involving guests: None.
3. Public comment: None.
4. Financials:
 - a. Revenues: FY11 - reviewed. Noted that revenues stay consistent on a 3-year average.
 - b. Expenditures: FY11 - reviewed. Halfway through the year budget sits on track at 54%.
5. Motions needed. (*Full board attendance is needed*)
 - a. Proposed Fee Increases. No motions were made. Fees were tabled until the February meeting. Items requested to go on record during the overall discussion are listed below.

Apartment Rent. Mr. Waters noted an additional item on the proposed fee increases the apartment rent from \$250 to \$300. The cemetery apartment rent is minimal and includes all utilities paid except phone and cable in exchange for daily opening and closing of the cemetery gates. Mr. Waters and Mr. Regan agreed that having a person living on the grounds deters vandals and after hours intruders. Much discussion followed without a clear decision on this.

Infants. Mr. Waters stated he was uncomfortable with the infants remaining free so that has been changed to \$100 but it was up to the board to make the final decision. Numerous board members disagreed with this fee. Mr. Regan suggested all costs for infants remain free if buried in the designated baby section but charged \$100 if buried in the open section. He added no second interment should be allowed in an infant grave. The board liked that idea.

Mrs. Jacobs stated cemetery fees were mostly relative to Sunset's but should not be compared to any other cemetery. She questioned the liner increase. Mr. Waters stated every burial needs a liner but

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that cost could change depending on board's comfort level. Mrs. Jacobs stated the cemetery should think hard over these cost increases or it could back itself right out of what it is making now. People look at increased prices and make decisions not just on one burial but those that follow. Bottom line is the revenue has stayed the same over the past three years but expenses have increased. Mrs. Jacobs stated she felt as costs increase burials will go down. Mrs. Gordon stated the board did not have a choice but were being forced to raise prices. Mrs. Jacobs stated this was a big mistake and the powers that be were not looking at what it will do. Mr. Waters noted the board's concerns but stated burials remain steady every year and he believes families will continue to come.

Monuments. Mr. Waters, Mr. Bender, Mr. Ramharter, and the cost study consultant agreed the cost and effect of entering into the monument business was not worth it. No changes will be made to cemetery services in this area. Mrs. Fraser agreed and noted entering into competition with local businesses was not allowable.

Board consensus tabled final decisions on fee increases until February. Mr. Waters and Mrs. Fraser would work on the motion wording that would include the board's concerns.

6. New or Continuing Items for Discussion:

- a. Preliminary draft ordinances. Mr. Waters distributed the existing ordinance and noted it does not include the updated wording for revenue funds. He distributed specific changes to the current ordinance for board review and discussion.

Permissions. Since 1970 the wording for permissions and who is authorized to use a grave has changed drastically. Mr. Waters suggested a new deed should be issued each time someone gives permission to another person to use a grave. Immediate family should be the only option. Mr. Waters stated the cemetery currently puts this decision back onto the family but the cemetery needs to not allow this to happen in the future. He stated more people want the option to bury on existing graves due to economic times. Mr. Regan stated past history was one person per grave and there was no such thing as two in a grave. Mrs. Jacobs stated she understood concerns about placing just anybody in a grave. She asked if the direction being suggested meant that her daughter would not be allowed to be buried with her great-grandparents. Mr. Regan said exactly that. Mrs. Jacobs stated it appeared the cemetery was locking old graves from adding cremation burials to them. Mrs. Jacobs asked if the reason for that was that the great-grandparents purchased the grave for themselves. Mr. Regan said that was exactly why. Mr. Waters noted there is currently no solution. Mr. Regan stated a grave was bought for one person and never intended for additional burials. He said the second interment was something that changed over years without a lot of thought going into it. It has now created more problems from trees to headstones to grave settling.

Mr. Waters believes reinstating the 1970 wording for immediate family and the new second interment charge should help. The board would need to define immediate family. Mrs. Fraser questioned if the new fee for a second interment would solve the issue. Mrs. Jacobs stated she sees two separate issues needing two separate rulings: First is a family's right to give permission to be buried in a grave, and the second is the proposed fee for second interment. She stated the second interment fee makes sense but strongly disagreed with the cemetery limiting or directing whose ashes are buried in a grave. Mrs. Jacobs stated it would be wrong to close the old section to all the families who are now being cremated. The idea of cremation was not thought of at the time of purchase but she highly doubts a relative would have minded today's decisions. Mrs. Cordis asked if grandchildren would be allowed in existing graves. Mr. Regan stated currently that would be allowed but the proposed wording would say immediate family so grandchildren would not be allowed. Mrs. Fraser noted that past generations did not think or know about what could happen in the future. Mrs. Jacobs agreed but never assumed she

didn't have the right to place whomever she wished in a grave. Mr. Regan stated graves were purchased for one person only with no intention of a second person going into the same grave. This is a big issue that needs work and good wording. He suggested the only person allowed to give permission should be the original purchaser not children or grandchildren. The board tabled this item for further discussion at the February meeting.

Mr. Waters noted an attached list of items discussed for ordinance review since the 2005 revision. Mr. Regan noted the importance of not allowing flower beds on a grave if the grave has a flush monument in front of another existing stone as it causes great problems for mowers.

Burial Information. Mr. Waters stated the next major change being requested regards the current practice of taking burial information over the phone. He proposes the funeral director write down the information and email or fax it to the cemetery. The accuracy of that information then becomes the funeral home's responsibility. Mr. Waters will discuss this with Mr. Evans.

- b. Mower / Multi-purpose Utility Cart. Mr. Waters stated although the current ordinance allows for the cemetery to purchase equipment with care fund money, city policy only allows replacement of items due for replacement according to the city wide replacement schedule. The mower is past due for replacement so that purchase is approved for replacement. The utility cart however is not eligible for replacement as the schedule shows a few more years of use before replacement is needed. To replace the utility cart earlier than the schedule the request must go through the upcoming budget process. Mr. Regan clarified the cemetery can not use care fund money to purchase the utility cart if it is not on the replacement schedule. Mr. Waters noted city administration is supportive of the need for the utility cart but must follow due process. Mr. Regan suggested the board consider tying future purchase items such as niche walls, planting trees, or purchasing equipment to the upcoming ordinance revision.

7. Informational Items *(These items require NO immediate board action but are strictly informational item)*

Mr. Waters noted the new council members would visit the cemetery on Friday for a short tour of the facility. He would meet with them at a committee meeting set for a later date to review the cemetery budget, board, and talk about upcoming issues. He invited board members to attend that meeting when it is scheduled.

8. Adjournment. Next meeting: February 2, 2012

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