

Missoula Cemetery Board Meeting
Thursday, May 7, 2015
12:00pm
Missoula City Cemetery Office

Minutes

Present: Marjorie Jacobs, Sharee Fraser, Mary Lou Cordis, Ron Regan, Mary Ellen Stubb, Lani Moore
Absent: Carol Gordon, Pat McHugh

Approval of board minutes: March 2015 approved as submitted.

Public comment. None.

Financials.

Revenues remain steady and ahead of last year's totals. Special fund balances were noted. Expenditures show nothing out of the ordinary. Garbage costs will go over budget and liner costs are currently over budget but both will balance out in the budget totals for the year.

New or Continuing Items for Discussion.

Screening project - Staff continues to review deeds and legal documents regarding the cemetery land purchases and usage agreements. Mrs. Stubb is compiling a list on the computer that will be a great resource for the cemetery. Land purchase research so far has not shown any restrictions on the land purchased from the Sticht family but there were restrictions on land purchased from the Chilcoat family. The board received a packet in March summarizing land use agreements. Mr. Regan noted there has never been an official written agreement between the cemetery board and other departments over use of this land. Street Supt. Ed Clay developed an agreement with the past cemetery board and overall the streets have continued to uphold their agreement of use and keeping the pit organized. The issue comes with the parks department and their unauthorized storage and lack of completing and cleaning up the screening project. Mr. Regan suggests the board compose a letter to the parks department to clean up the area. Mrs. Fraser will come to the cemetery next week to draft a letter for the board to review at next month's meeting.

Utility cart to bid - Mr. Regan requested the board approve the purchase of a Toro utility cart using Care Fund money. Cost is approximately \$23,000. The new Toro cart can fit the sprayer and tree trimmer attachments.
MOTION: Mrs. Cordis moved to proceed with the bid process to purchase a Toro utility cart. Mrs. Jacobs seconded. Approved: 3 ayes, 2 absent.

Board approved policies - It has come to the cemetery's attention that the board needs to begin separating policy from ordinance. The city attorney states the ordinance is law while board policies work within the ordinance to allow more flexibility to change and improve policy. Eventually those policies can then become ordinance. Mr. Regan asked the board to think about policies because this will be an ongoing discussion.

Mr. Regan handed out two examples regarding monument permits that were recently held up in the cemetery office until cemetery paperwork regarding the graves was updated. Much discussion was held on recent situations like this. Limited access to families brings into question whether the cemetery can hold permits up and for how long. Mrs. Jacobs voiced concern over the cemetery micromanaging family decisions and their ability to change their minds. Mr. Regan said the cemetery must follow the processes set out in the ordinance and in

future board policies. He suggested the cemetery contact the families when a monument permit arrives in the office to help educate the families and update the cemetery assignments. There will be families who are willing and glad to do this and then there will be those who are not.

Mr. Regan reviewed another case where he recently approved a monument and second interment in a grave where there was no documentation on record for this. In this instance the monument was held until the gentleman contacted the cemetery to state his intent. The question is how long does the cemetery hold things up? Mrs. Cordis approved with Mr. Regan's decision and stated that sometimes he has to make judgement calls to move forward. Mr. Regan says policy making will simplify the ordinance process without micromanaging.

Infant fees - Mr. Regan asked the board to approve removing the \$100 cost of an infant grave from the current fee schedule. An infant grave had always been free in the past but the cemetery began charging in 2012. Mr. Regan wants that to go back to a free donation because all other infant fees remain free (opening and closing the grave, a poly vault when needed, and a monument permit.) Infant graves can be chosen in any available grave site within the cemetery. The ordinance states the only time the family should incur the cost of the grave is if they decide to inter someone else in the same grave as the infant, then the family must pay current grave costs to do this. **MOTION: Mrs. Jacobs moved to discontinue charging \$100 for an infant grave, instead the grave will be donated like all other costs associated with infants. Mrs. Cordis seconded. Approved: 3 ayes, 2 absent.**

Chain link fence work for south and east sides - Mr. Regan said the east side fence at the end of the bull pen by the Sandau house and the south fence in the bull pen are falling down and need replaced. The total estimated cost is \$7,700. Mrs. Fraser voiced concern that this not come out of care fund money. Mr. Regan said the costs would be absorbed into the cemetery budget. He did say that eventually the long fence will need replaced and that will be expensive. **MOTION: Mrs. Cordis moved to replace the fencing as needed using funds currently in the cemetery budget. Mrs. Jacobs seconded. Approved: 3 ayes, 2 absent.**

Irrigation needed in front section - Mr. Regan said this was not needed but suggested the board think about what they want the front section to look like for the public. Laying aluminum pipe and planting grass would make the area look much better but there is a cost to doing this. Mrs. Fraser stated that if this is not required then she does not wish to keep spending money, especially not from the care fund. She prefers to do the important things and if money is left over then items like this can be done.

Informational Items.

Website overview - Mrs. Stubb showed the board printouts of the newly drafted cemetery web pages. Mr. Regan's suggested changes are to have a full page for the columbarium showing inscription design, a diagram for the monument mow strip requirements, and the ordinance to open and flip page by page. Mrs. Stubb will begin work on those. Mr. Regan said once the cemetery pages are complete then cemetery staff will push the pages live to make sure the links work and the FAQs reflect the ordinance. He is excited about the new design and hopes the many pictures and slideshows will promote the cemetery by showing how beautiful it is here. The board members stated they were very pleased with the design and photos.

Mapping project - Mrs. Moore gave the board an overview of this project. The B blocks, D blocks, niches and columbariums, and 24 of the A blocks were already in the computer. So far Mrs. Moore has completed an additional 9 blocks. She explained this process means she compares the interments in the registry to the old hand written, hard to read maps. Information is entered into a computerized map and any discrepancies are researched

using old ledger information and sometimes having Mr. Regan visually review the grounds to resolve discrepancies. The cemetery is putting forth a good effort to make complete and accurate maps using available cemetery information. The end result is a computerized map that will be available to the public and linked on our website. Mrs. Cordis commended staff for the amount of work this project takes. Mr. Regan said the first phase completed was the data entry of every interment into the registry database, the second phase is to update maps into the computer, and the third phase is to promote the cemetery through the web site. The public will have access to both the registry and maps through the website.

Flower care - Mrs. Stubb reported 55 boxes are paid for 2014 which is down 6 boxes from last year and 113 beds are paid for 2014 which is down 26 beds from last year. Mrs. Fraser asked if the fees for these items was why they continued to go down. Mr. Regan said over the past 15 years there has been a steady decrease in these items and in decorations on the grounds. He believes it's simply changing times and families no longer able or willing to decorate the graves.

Staffing - seasonal / intermittent positions - Mr. Regan reported that the cemetery is back to full staff. The final 10-month seasonal position and the 5-month intermittent position are filled.

Adjournment at 1:50pm. Next meeting will be June 4, 2015.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Ellen Stubb, Cemetery Sexton