

Village of Bellaire

CEMETERY COMMITTEE

Helen Schuckel, Chairperson
Terry Smith (Forest Home Twp.) **David Schulz (Village Council)**

COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

January 2, 2019

1. **Call to Order:** Chairperson Schuckel called the meeting to order at 8:02 a.m.
2. **Roll Call Attendance**
 - Present:** Chairperson Schuckel, President Schulz, and Supervisor Smith
 - Absent:** None.
 - Staff Present:** Lori Luckett, Clerk and Bradley Keiser, DPW Supervisor
 - Also Present:** Karen Johnson and Gary Mortensen
3. **Approval of Agenda:** The agenda was approved.
 - Motion by President Schulz, seconded by Supervisor Smith, to approve the agenda as presented.**
 - Motion carried by voice vote.**
4. **Approval of the August 31, 2018 Meeting Minutes:** The minutes were approved.
 - Motion by President Schulz, seconded by Supervisor Smith, to approve the minutes of August 31, 2018 as presented. Motion carried by voice vote.**
5. **Public Comment on Agenda Items:** Karen Johnson voiced a complaint about the removal of a tree within Lakeview Cemetery.
6. **Old Business**
 - a) **Cemetery Rules and Regulations** – President Schulz noted that a couple of meetings prior the committee had discussed soliciting other cemeteries rules and regulations to review. He wondered whether Lakeview Cemetery rules are punitive or too relaxed. He also wondered how cemeteries handled burials and plantings that may have been in compliance at the time of interment but are in violation under current rules. Chairperson Schuckel indicated that she had tried to find rules on line but was not successful. Supervisor Smith stated that the Michigan Townships Association (MTA) is a good resource and has a person who is able to provide assistance in dealing with cemetery issues. He offered to provide the contact information. President Schulz has a sense that last year plantings were removed for the sake of enforcement, even if they did not present an issue with mowing. Gary Mortensen entered the meeting. President Schulz explained what the committee had discussed. DPW Supervisor Keiser arrived at the meeting. Mr. Mortensen explained that he had been asked to help Mancelona and Central Lake address issues within their cemeteries. Mr. Mortensen thought it necessary to use common sense in enforcement. Supervisor Smith commented that he did not think the current rules were too arbitrary. How the rules are enforced, the expectation levels, has been the issue. He agrees with reviewing and comparing the rules to other cemeteries. He cautioned that there might not be a one-size fits all rule. Mr. Mortensen said that the State of Michigan is now getting involved. He offered to gather cemetery rules from local townships that have rules. Once again, he stressed common sense. Questions are about plantings, headstones, and benches. He thought it important that the township have to right to dispose of materials, including trees and shrubs that need to be disposed of. It needs to be explicit in the rules. Issues have arisen because of the placement of names on each side of the headstones. Mr. Mortensen said that headstones are every which way and some lots have footstones that were installed without notice. Mr. Mortensen again offered to gather the information for the committee. The matter was tabled.
 - b) **Flag Policy** – Supervisor Smith reported that a constituent had complained about the size of a flag flying over a gravesite. He had just seen the photographs of the flag. Supervisor Keiser added that it was a large flag. Clerk Luckett said that the complaint also raised the question about lighting the flag. Clerk Luckett had contacted the American Legion National Headquarters and learned that there is no minimum size of flag for

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illumination. If flags are flown at night, they are to be lit. The representative did indicate that they defer to cemetery policies and procedures regarding flags. There was discussion that the township has provided flags for veterans' graves that are placed by the Boy Scouts. Flags are placed by Memorial Day each year and stay through the year. Mr. Mortensen said that he puts a flag holder on the veterans' sites. After discussion the committee recognized that only one complaint had been made; it did not warrant developing a new rule or policy.

7. New Business

a) 2019-2020 Budget Items – The committee reviewed the proposed budget. Supervisor Keiser indicated that the proposed budget was similar to last year's and that he had reviewed it with Treasurer Odom. Chairperson Schuckel asked if the cemetery maintenance worker was going to be replaced and was informed that the Administration and Personnel Committee had already made the recommendation. President Schulz asked about the repairs and maintenance line item and whether the rules and regulations had been placed at the water spigots. Supervisor Keiser indicated that they were ready but had not been installed. Supervisor Keiser also explained that there was money in the budget for a placard. President Schulz asked how many are interred each year. Mr. Mortensen thought 25 to 30. President Schulz suggested that the cemetery sexton could follow up with families about the rules. Mr. Mortensen suggested that rules should be provided earlier, at the time of purchase. Clerk Luckett explained that a copy of the rules is provided with the deed when a lot is purchased. President Schulz made the motion to recommend the budget as presented to the Administration and Personnel Committee for inclusion in the 2019-2020 Village of Bellaire budget.

Motion by President Schulz, seconded by Supervisor Smith, to recommend the budget as presented, to the Administration and Personnel Committee for inclusion in the 2019-2020 Village of Bellaire budget. Motion carried by voice vote.

8. Discussion Items: President Schulz stated that the men working to install the flags for Veteran's Day had difficulty locating the flag holders. Perhaps a dowel could be placed in the holders to make for easier identification. Supervisor Keiser explained that the men are working to develop a pipe and metal cap system that could be located by a metal detector. They do not want anything that sticks out of the ground. Supervisor Smith asked about acquiring more land for the cemetery. Mr. Mortensen mentioned the land across the road from the cemetery that is currently for sale. Supervisor Smith wondered if the goal was for the cemetery to fill and then go to perpetual care. He spoke about property acquired by Forest Home Township. Mr. Mortensen encouraged the committee to consider cemeteries to be like parks. He added that cemeteries do produce some income.

9. Communications/Informational: None presented.

10. Member/Public Comment: Mrs. Johnson stated her complaint about a tree that had been planted and then cut down. Supervisor Keiser asked about the type of tree and explained that the local forester had checked the trees and had recommended their removal because there was a disease going tree to tree. This fall the stumps were ground. Supervisor Keiser will work with Mrs. Johnson about the placement of a different tree. A Crimson Maple was suggested. Mr. Mortensen also offered his assistance.

11. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 8:49 a.m.

Compiled by Lori Luckett, Clerk
Minutes are subject to approval

Approved: _____
Helen Schuckel, Chairperson

Date: _____