

Minutes of July 17, 2025 Cemetery Trustees Meeting

Held at the Meeting House, Canterbury, NH

Present were John Goegel, Jan Cote, Sam Papps, and Mark Stevens. Also present were Linda and Bob Fife.

John Goegel opened the meeting at 9 a.m., and welcome the Fifes to the Trustees meeting.

1) Linda Fife spoke, explaining that they own a lot at Maple Grove Cemetery, and their son Kevin wants his own monument on his grave, which will be within the Fife's lot. Because the bylaws do not allow two upright monuments, she asked the Trustees to allow separating out one or two graves for Kevin from their lot, to sell to him as his own lot. The intention is to allow him to have his own monument that is representative of his career in the stonemason's trade. Linda and Bob bought eight graves in the 1990's, and wish for Kevin to buy back the grave(s) from the Cemetery Trustees for the price they paid originally, rather than the current price of a grave.

John Goegel spoke for the Trustees, stating that they cannot make any exceptions for the monuments rule in the bylaws, and the Trustees will require only one monument for the entire lot. He explained that one option is to sell the Trustees any number of the unused lots for the original price paid, and the Trustees would sell them back to Kevin for the current price of a grave.

Linda Fife asked about Article 4, Section G of the bylaws, where it reads "Exceptions may be made by the Trustees...for good cause shown". She explained that Bob has resided all his life in Canterbury, and that she could request that be considered along with the family's contributions to the town as reason for an exception for the price. John Goegel reiterated that the Trustees policy is to sell the lot back at the current price of a grave. Sam Papps added that he was concerned that this might set a precedence which would be difficult for the Trustees to manage, because some of the old lots in the cemeteries were sold for \$5 or \$10 dollars for a large number of graves, and the ramifications of selling graves back for far below the current rate could prove problematic. Jan Cote requested clarification on the exception the Fifes are requesting, and Linda replied the exception was the cost of the lots for Kevin to buy back be the original price of the lots in the 1990's, not requesting two monuments.

Linda noted that Bob was in favor of one large, traditional monument for their family lot. John Goegel offered that perhaps Kevin could buy his own lot in another part of the cemetery, and the Fifes responded that this was not what they wanted. Linda Fife also asked about Green Burial, that she was pleased to see the Trustees allowed this in the cemetery, and the Trustees spoke with the Fifes about the vandalism in Article 7, that the lot owners were responsible for the cost repairs, not the Town. Linda Fife asked if a stone was ordered, would it need to be approved by the Trustees and the answer was yes. She brought up Article 4 Section G again, asking about good cause shown, and the Trustees discussed this with the Fifes, which resulted in Linda requesting clarification on this point. Sam Papps stated his interpretation of that particular article was to whom the Trustees could sell a lot to, meaning non-residents who have a history in Town, or have family in the cemetery, not that the price of the lot was up for negotiation. Linda Fife responded that the article was not clear, and she could see this for new plots, but not for old plots

that were already purchased. The Trustees discussed with Bob and Linda the next steps should they wish to sell graves for Kevin to buy back. Bob discussed the retaining wall that he built next to his lot, that they graded and made the site more level. Linda requested clarification again on Article 4 Section G, and asked the Trustees to look into this. The Trustees thanked the Fifes for coming to the meeting, and Bob and Linda Fife left.

2) John Goegel made a motion to accept the minutes of the May 22nd meeting, seconded by Jan Cote. Sam noted that Mark Stevens pointed out “delineated” rather than “denoted” for laying out the new graves. The Trustees voted and approved the minutes as amended.

3) John spoke for the Sexton’s report, stating there was overaggressive mowing on May 26th and June 1st, which had been brought to the Road Agent’s attention. On May 28th, Mark Stevens and Kent Ruesswick set corner stones and a marker for the Schleigers. On June 1st, John and Kent installed the new sign at the Maple Grove Cemetery. Jan asked why it was so short, and John noted the post and the hole dug resulted in the height it was. On June 20th, Sam, Kent and John laid out the Emery lot for Don Blanchard’s interment. On July 2nd, John moved the ornaments at Kevin A. Fife’s grave to be clustered around the marker, and the Trustees will send a letter to the family requesting the placement be more in line with the monument, as it is a maintenance issue. The Trustees reviewed the interments of Donald Blanchard, the Schleigers, Arthur Stavros and Sumner Dole.

4) The Historian’s Report was delivered by Mark Stevens, noting the recent newspaper article about George Shannon resulted in a descendant reaching out to Mark regarding the story, one George Shannon Prescott, from Loudon. Mark also noted the Cemetery Walk was working on scripts, and he was working on checking for errors.

5) There was no Veterans’ Affairs business.

6) Jan noted that they would decide dates for the Cemetery Inspections in the August meeting.

7) The Trustees signed a deed for one grave for the Southers, and a deed for four graves for the Noels.

8) Sam made a motion that the Canterbury Cemetery Trustees vote to sell to Kathleen Magerison Maxwell, daughter of John and Jacqueline Magerison, one 4’x10’ grave at Maple Grove Cemetery, for the current price of \$450.00; seconded by John Goegel. The discussion was that Mrs. Maxwell was raised in Canterbury, her parents were buried at Maple Grove, and she is a tax payer in Canterbury. The Trustees unanimously voted to approve the sale, and the motion passed.

9) Sam read an email from Diana Blais Holt, requesting that a grave be sold in the Blais Lot (Sec F Row 6 Graves 8-11) back to the Trustees so her son Tyler could buy it for a monument for Wayne Blais. The Trustees discussed this proposal, and the State Cemetery RSA 289 regarding inheritance of a cemetery lot. They concluded that they need more information, and that they would request that Diana provide a notarized document consenting to the sale of a grave from the lot back to the Trustees, with the intention that Tyler Blais would buy it back from the Trustees, and the document needs to be signed by herself (Diana Holt), by Paula Blais, and any adult

children that Diana and Wayne had together. Once this document was submitted to the Trustees, they could vote on the matter. Sam will follow up on this.

10) The Trustees discussed the report of vandalism of flowers at a cemetery lot on or about July 2nd. Sam requested that they appropriate \$300 for security cameras, and the Trustees agreed that would be sufficient. Jan Cote offered to help install them.

11) The Trustees reviewed old business, and they were awaiting the headstone repairman to bring back a quote for work this summer.

12) Sam made a motion to buy back John and Kate Goegel's lot at Maple Grove Cemetery, seconded by Jan Cote. The Trustees voted, and motion passed.

Jan Cote made a motion to bill the lot owners who had not replied to "corner marker" letters sent in May, for \$300 each for a set of corner markers; seconded by Sam Papps. The Trustees voted, and the motion passed.

Sam brought up the request from Bill Adams, if the Trustees could foresee any use of a drone for cemetery work, and the Trustees concluded that they would not like to use a drone, and therefore could not support this project.

The Trustees decided the next meeting would be **Tuesday** August 19th, at 9 a.m. The meeting was closed by voice vote at 11:11 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Samuel Papps, Secretary
for the Canterbury Cemetery Trustees