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CITY OF MELROSE

WYOMING CEMETERY

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Cemetery Commission Meeting Minutes

January 15, 2026, 8:45 A.M.

Melrose City Hall, Cassidy Conference Room, 562 Main Street, Melrose, MA 02176

Attendance:

Chairman, Daniel O'Neill (DO)

Cemetery Administrator, Denise Slane (DS)

Commission Member, Susan Cann (SC)

Cemetery Foreman, Jack Rossi (JR)

Co-Chair, Eileen Hamblin (EH)

DPW Deputy Director, Jim Troup (JT)

DPW Director, Elena Proakis-Ellis (EPE)

Call to Order

DO called the meeting to order at 8:45 a.m.

Review of Minutes

Meeting minutes from December 18, 2025, were reviewed. A motion to accept the minutes was made by SC and seconded by EH. Minutes accepted.

Public Comment

A motion to open the meeting for public comment was made by SC and seconded by EH. All in favor. Floor opened at 8:45.

No residents in attendance.

A motion to close the meeting for public comment was made by SC and seconded by EH. All in favor. Floor closed at 8:45.

Financial Report

The financial report for December 2025 as prepared by DS was reviewed. A motion to accept the reports was made by EH and seconded by SC. Reports accepted.

New Business

Discussion of Cemetery Equipment

Jack Rossi (JR) updated the commission on the current condition of the cemetery backhoe and dump truck. JR discussed that the backhoe (purchased 1997 - 29 yrs old) is having issues again, the 2010 dump truck is still waiting for repairs (about 11 months now), the 2011 dump truck is starting to have issues that will need to be addressed. He explained that the department does borrow a backhoe from the Parks or Water Departments when the cemetery one is not working. He also explained that they are not ideal as they do not meet requirements for digging within the cemetery. He explained that one of the biggest concerns is the size of the dump trucks we borrow as they are too heavy and that could cause them to sink and possibly cause damage to the ground. Tire size is another concern as they cannot be too wide, or the truck cannot fit between the rows of headstones. JR explained that cemetery equipment has certain specifications for equipment so that it will fit properly to operate within the confines of the rows and be able to properly operate moving vaults and digging between headstones and rows. He also stated that the cemetery backhoe has specific safety features that aid in this type of work. SC asked when the repairs to the backhoe will be completed and how often has the backhoe had to be repaired within the last year. JR stated that in the last few months the backhoe has been out for repairs three times. He stated that the parts to repair the current issue have been ordered and that repairs are expected to be completed within a week. JR also informed that commission that the DPW does well in keeping up with the maintenance of the backhoe and that is why they have been able to have it for this amount of time. EPE stated that the city is looking to replace DPW vehicles and there is a plan to replace some at the cemetery within the next fiscal year and up to 3 years. Further discussion was had about equipment types and specifications. DO stressed that it is important to include JR in the decision making of what type of vehicles are ordered for the cemetery and the specification needed for the type of work done at the cemetery.

JR also discuss that the current lawn mowers are newer and should hopefully have another 5–6-year lifespan.

Future Cemetery Expansion

DO stated that with him stepping down from the commission next month he would like to remind the new commissioners to think about plans for future expansion. SC asked if there is an overall plan for expansion that will help to give them a base to work from. DO stated that there is a current plan and he will give it to the commissioners. DO stated that much of the expansion is older roadways that are no longer being used. He stated that JR will need to be involved with any expansion planning as he is the most knowledgeable of the grounds and needs for burials.

Discussion and Vote on Sale of Lot

DO made a motion to allow the pre-sale of a grave for two burials for a former commission member. DO presented that the individual was instrumental in helping to recover funds for the cemetery, they helped to secure funding for the digitalization project, tree project and repair of the cemetery wall.

Motion: DO made a motion that the cemetery commission allow for the past commission member to be able to pre-purchase a grave for two casket burials at the current pricing.

Second: None

Further Discussion: EH asked if the individual had requested graves in the past lottery. It was discussed that at the time the individual did not meet the age requirements for eligibility. EH

stated that she is leery of granting this to a past commission member and would like to understand the guidelines of favoritism being shown before deciding. DO stated that he is not sure if based on the contributions of the individual if would be considered favoritism. EH stated that what the past member did was considered part of the job of a commission member. EH stated that the commission members should review the ethics guidelines before making this decision. SC stated that it would be good for the commission to reach out to the City Solicitor before deciding on this.

Request to Table Motion: EH requested the motion be tabled until the commission can clarify the guidelines of favoritism. SC and DO agree. DO stated he will contact the City Solicitor to clarify and will present it at the next meeting.

Request Tabled – No Vote

Old Business

Vesper Section Barrier

DS stated that the barrier had been installed. JR explained the type of disc barrier that was installed. DO thanked the DPW for their help with getting this completed.

Cemetery Digitalization Project

DS stated that more time was needed to complete cross checking of records. It was discussed that the presentation be moved to the February meeting. Jane Pitts, who is working on the database and cross checking, agrees with moving the presentation to February to give us more time to complete the cross checking.

Items not reasonably anticipated by Chairman at time of posting

Veteran Flag Placement

DO updated the commission on the meeting that Veteran Services held with DPW on Veteran flag placement. At the meeting it was discussed leaving the flags out but limiting replacement on tattered or broken flags due to supply. It was stated that people are used to having the flags up year-round and that when they were removed this year the office did receive many calls about people wanting them replaced on the graves. It was discussed that flags will be replaced once a year on the Saturday before Memorial Day. SC stated she is concerned about flags that may become tattered or damaged from the weather. It was discussed that throughout the year flags are broken or tattered will be removed and retired at the spring retirement ceremony but will not be replaced until the next Memorial Day. EH asked if Veterans Services or the Veterans Board agrees with this policy, she stated she is concerned how they will feel. JR reminded the commission that Wyoming Cemetery is not a military cemetery but that there are areas designated for Veterans only. JR also stated that they do a daily check through the entire cemetery and they do remove damaged flags to be retired as they see them. SC stated that the current policy should be updated to reflect these changes. DO asked SC if she would meet with DS to write up the policy to be submitted to the Veterans Board and Veterans Services. SC agreed and will setup a time to meet with DS.

Veteran Burials

DO stated that the commission will discuss the rules and regulations for a Veteran burial and their spouse at the next meeting. He stated that there have been some questions asked about this process.

Removal of Poison Ivy

EH had spoken with a resident that inquired about the removal of what they believed to be poison ivy on the cemetery grounds. JR explained that the area they are looking at is not poison ivy, but when poison ivy is found on the grounds how the removal is handled.

Tree Work

EH asked about an arborist to look at the aging trees in the cemetery. JT stated that the DPW tree division is aware of the tree work that needs to be completed and that they have been working with JR to determine the scope of work and get the work scheduled as weather allows. JR stated that the tree division meets with him often and they address tree work by most dangerous as determined by the tree division and not because of the way it looks. It was discussed that people will complain about a healthy tree just because they don't like the way it looks. EH did state that when one of the larger trees fell due to high winds that she was impressed with how quickly the cleanup was completed.

DO made a motion to adjourn, SC second the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 9:28 a.m.