TOWN OF EAST HADDAM
Cemetery Committee
Meeting Minutes
April 17, 2025
Municipal Office Building, Meeting room 3
Via Zoom and YouTube Live

In attendance:

Cemetery Committee Members:

Crary Brownell, Vice Chairman
Alison Guinness
Debra Denette, Secretary

Others: Rick Shea, Facilities
Don Henson, VFW

Call to Order

Crary Brownell called the Cemetery Committee to order at 7:00 p.m.

Adoption of Minutes.

Motion by Mrs. Guinness to accept the minutes of March 20, 2025 regular meeting as presented. Mrs. Denette seconded the motion and noted that she corrected the footer information after printing the minutes. The motion adopting both the March 20, 2025 meeting carried unanimously.

Communications

Mrs. Denette noted that there were no communication items that were not on the agenda.

Veteran's Update

Mr. Henson stated that the cemetery troopers are getting back to work outdoors. He stated that they will likely be at Bashan for another month. 12 broken stones were repaired over the winter and are being returned. The Preservation Connecticut awards ceremony is coming up and several of the troopers are going to the recognition dinner. Mr. Henson stated that following completion of Bashan, there are a few loose ends to finish up at Riverview and Tater. He also reiterated that the troopers plan to return their focus to veterans. Basin Hill, Bashan, Parker and Tater Hill were all completely restored. He noted that this action took more than a year, and all are small cemeteries.

Discussion was held on a workshop being held at Moodus Cemetery on May 3rd. 10-2 is planned with a pizza break for lunch. Mr. Henson reiterated that he would love more community involvement and is more than happy to teach anyone how to clean and repair gravestones in hopes that they will continue the effort.

Facilities Update

Rick Shea advised that the two dead trees are down at Bashan Cemetery. He also added that the mulch piles have been removed.

Three Bridges Cemetery

Mrs. Denette stated that a letter of intent to convey the property was received from the property owner. The authorizing resolutions have been prepared along with the quit-claim deed which is under review by the town attorney.

Old Business

The Mark Phillips stone still has not been located
The Spencer stones are still located in the basement of the Municipal Office Complex
Trees at Bashan were removed, this item can now be removed from old business
Fencing at Bashan still a wish of the committee, and an appropriate grant request
Stairs at Warner – still a wish of the committee, and an appropriate grant request

Budget

Mrs. Denette advised that the new date for referendum is May 27, 2025. The Board of Finance missed a procedural requirement and had to redo prior action to be compliant.

Neglected Cemeteries Grant

Mrs. Denette noted that East Haddam was not awarded a grant this cycle. Two projects as noted above should be teed up and ready to go for the next cycle.

Mr. Brownell asked if an item could be added to the agenda to discuss the addition of an alternate. Mrs. Denette noted that a 2/3 majority vote of those present can add an item to the agenda at a regular meeting, which this is. Accordingly, Mr. Brownell motioned to add an item to the agenda regarding an alternate. Mrs. Denette seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mount Parnassus possible expansion

Mrs. Denette stated that she watched the March 15 Board of Finance workshop where discussion of the appraisal provided for expansion at Mt. Parnassus Cemeter was discussed. She stated that Mr. Thomas and Mrs. Goff questioned why the town would even be in the business of selling cemetery space. (Mr. Barney appeared in agreement). Mr. Gelston and Mr. Corbett recognized the need for cemetery expansion. Mr. Kolasinski didn't think we should purchase additional property when the town already owns so much. Mrs. Denette requested to be on the agenda, no response was received. So during audience of citizens at their regular meeting she spoke during audience of citizens explaining the charge, past practice and queried that if the Board of Finance will not ultimately authorize funding for additional burial space it would be imperative to learn this now prior to expending time and resources in the pursuit. After brief discussion it was suggested that the Cemetery Committee ask to be on the Board of Finance agenda following adoption of the budget.

Alternate

Discussion was held on the need for one. Mrs. Denette stated that it would be necessary to ask the BOS to amend the ordinance that establishes the committee in order to have an alterate. Mrs. Guinness querried if increasing membership would be a better path to pursue. Ultimately, it was suggested that the ordinance be reviewed at the next meeting so any modifications sought can be brought forward all at once. It was noted that the ordinance and practice regarding budgeting are not in sync.

Audience of Citizens

Nothing noted.

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm upon a motion made by Mrs. Denette, seconded by Mrs. Guinness and carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Deb Denette