

**Greenwood Cemetery Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
Monday, April 5, 2021, 10 A.M.
Virtual Meeting**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Linda Buchanan, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:00 A.M.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Linda Buchanan (location: Birmingham, MI)
Pam DeWeese (location: Birmingham, MI)
Linda Peterson (location: Birmingham, MI)
Laura Schreiner (location: Bloomfield Township, MI)
George Stern (location: Birmingham, MI)
Margaret Suter (location: Birmingham, MI)

Absent: Joseph Vercellone

Administration: City Clerk Alex Bingham; Museum Director Leslie Pielack

Guests: None

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A. Review of the Minutes of March 5, 2021

On page three, Chair Buchanan asked that "Chair Buchanan said the discussion at the May meeting should find a way to clarify that the City no longer offers payment plans." be changed to "Chair Buchanan said the discussion at the May meeting should find a way to clarify whether the City still has and wishes to continue with a payment plan."

Ms. Schreiner asked that the spelling of her name be corrected in the body of the minutes.

MOTION: by DeWeese, seconded by Suter:

To approve the minutes of March 5, 2021 as amended.

VOTE: Yeas, 6
Nays, 0

IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Review of Goals as outlined in Yearly Report

Clerk Bingham reviewed the item.

Board members agreed to individually submit their GCAB goal recommendations for the upcoming year to Clerk Bingham in advance of the May meeting.

Clerk Bingham said she would compile the recommendations and have them ready for presentation at the meeting.

B. Review of Grave Sales & Next Grave Release Recommendation

Clerk Bingham reviewed the item.

Chair Buchanan¹ said fewer than 54 graves should be released since the question of tree locations had not yet been determined. She stated that 38 graves would be more appropriate. She also noted that Ms. Arcome still had an additional five graves available from the last release, bringing the total of available graves to 43 if Chair Buchanan's modified resolution passes.

The Board requested that Chair Buchanan attend the meeting on April 15, 2021 with Clerk Bingham, DPS, the City arborist, and Museum Director Pielack for a preliminary discussion on likely tree locations.

Clerk Bingham clarified that the April 15 date for that meeting was still tentative, but that she would check with DPS to solidify the timing and see if it would be possible for Chair Buchanan to attend.

If the meeting occurs on April 15, Clerk Bingham said she and Chair Buchanan² would write a memorandum to inform the Board about the meeting that they could review in advance of their May meeting. Clerk Bingham reminded the Board what kinds of communication about the memorandum would run afoul of the Open Meetings Act.

A number of Board members expressed frustration that the grave map provided to them in by Ms. Arcome was and remains inaccurate in terms of grave availability. It was noted that some graves marked available are actually obstructed by trees.

Ms. Suter noted that ~~this~~³ issue of obstruction⁴ comes up every time a grave release is discussed, and that trying to rely on inaccurate information adds unnecessary work to the Board's workload. She asked that Ms. Arcome be directed to generate accurate information regarding which graves remain unavailable for use due to trees or other issues, so that the Board can trust the information they are working with moving forward.

¹ As changed at the May 7, 2021 meeting.

² As changed at the May 7, 2021 meeting.

³ As changed at the May 7, 2021 meeting.

⁴ As changed at the May 7, 2021 meeting.

The Board agreed to discuss limiting how long a grave sale can be pending as part of their upcoming Rules and Regulations review.

MOTION: by Suter, seconded by Peterson:

To recommend that the Commission release 38 graves in Greenwood Cemetery, Section B, Rows 17c, 16c, 15c, and 14a.

VOTE: Yeas, 6
Nays, 0

Mr. Stern asked whether the Clerk's office was integrating his report regarding which graves might still be available for sale.

Clerk Bingham said she was not aware of his report.

Mr. Stern said he would provide the Clerk's Office with another copy.

C. Review of Fee Schedule

Clerk Bingham reviewed the item.

The Board asked Clerk Bingham to report back regarding how much Greenwood's subcontractors charge for the services listed in the fee schedule.

Mr. Stern said it might be worthwhile for the City to claim some of the difference between the subcontractor's charge and the listed fee for the Cemetery's perpetual care fund where appropriate. He also said it might be worthwhile to direct Ms. Arcome to go out for bids on the services listed in the fee schedule.

Clerk Bingham noted that these are contractual issues with Ms. Arcome, and that per the City Attorney no significant changes to her contract can be made until the next RFP cycle, which is the 2022-2023 fiscal year. She said that if the Board had concerns about issues like this they could prepare them for inclusion in the next RFP.

Chair Buchanan stated that former Board member Kevin Desmond stated that \$1,400 for an interment or disinterment was a standard rate, and that the Board adopted that amount based on Mr. Desmond's recommendation.

MOTION: by DeWeese, seconded by Suter:

To recommend that the City Commission approve the suggested revisions to the Greenwood Cemetery Fee Schedule effective immediately.

VOTE: Yeas, 6

Nays, 0

D. Cemetery Services Contract

Clerk Bingham reviewed the item.

For the GCAB to recommend the renewal of the cemetery services contract with Creative Collaborations for the 2021-2022 fiscal year.

Clerk Bingham reiterated the guidance from the City Attorney that no significant changes could be made to the Cemetery Services contract until the next RFP cycle which would come for the 2022/23 FY. She also reiterated that in the interim the Board could prepare the changes they would like to recommend the Commission consider regarding the contract renewal. She said that coming up with recommended changes could be one of the Board's goals if they saw fit.

There was Board comment that they had not seen, reviewed, or endorsed the letter from Ms. Arcome to former Asst. City Manager Gunter that was included as an addendum to the contract. A number of Board members confirmed that there were changes they would recommend for the contract in general if given the opportunity.

~~Mr. Stern and Ms. Suter~~ Two Board members⁵ said they wanted it made clear to the Commission that the Board's likely affirmative vote was a "rubber stamp" on the contract renewal⁶, per Mr. Stern. They explained the Board would likely vote affirmatively because the City needed to maintain continuity of service for the Cemetery, even though some Board members had reservations regarding the contract.

Clerk Bingham said she would indicate that in her memorandum presenting the item to the Commission. She stated that the Commission must have been aware of the letter from Ms. Arcome to former Asst. City Manager Gunter because it was included in previous Commission agenda packets.

MOTION: by DeWeese, seconded by Buchanan:

To recommend the renewal of the cemetery services contract with Creative Collaborations for the 2021-2022 fiscal year.

Mr. Stern then recommended that the Board consider a six-month contract renewal instead of a year.

Ms. DeWeese said it would be unfair to Ms. Arcome to only grant a six-month renewal.

Ms. Schreiner said that the current contract renewal cycle had previously been decided on based on when services were needed, the Board's schedule, and the Clerk's Office's schedule.

⁵ As clarified at the May 7, 2021 meeting.

⁶ As clarified at the May 7, 2021 meeting.

Clerk Bingham said that a six-month renewal would likely be too much for the Clerk's Office to handle along with the November election.

VOTE: Yeas, 5
 Nays, 1 (Stern)

E. Discussion on what to prepare for the May GCAB meeting

Clerk Bingham reviewed the item.

The Board agreed to review the Language, Definitions and Lot Sale Policy aspects of the Greenwood Cemetery's Rules and Regulations at their May 2021 meeting.

VI. REPORTS

- A. Updates from Museum Director Leslie Pielack
- B. Financial Reports
- C. Cemetery Sales & Activity
- D. Clerk's Office Update
- E. City Managers Report (February)

VII. OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FOR MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA

There were no public comments.

VIII. BOARD COMMENTS

Ms. Suter said the GCAB meetings should be kept to their scheduled first Friday of the month whenever possible. She said that rescheduling the meeting placed a burden on her and likely other Board members, as they are all busy. She asked that the Clerk's Office and Ms. Arcome not do it again unless totally necessary.

Chair Buchanan complimented DPS on the work being done in the Cemetery. She said a wrought iron gate might be considered to replace the pole and chain in Section F that she has previously addressed as being an eyesore.

IX. ADJOURN

Chair Buchanan adjourned the meeting at 11:44 AM.

Next Meeting: May 7, 2021



Alexandria Bingham, City Clerk
/le