

TOWN OF HEBRON
ad hoc CEMETERY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 24, 2015

PRESENT: Carol Bears, Ron Collins, Tracey Steenbergen, John Hilson, Doug Merrill, Don Merrill, Bruce Barnard, Ellie Lonske

5:00 p.m. Meeting called to order by Chair Carol Bears

The Committee addressed each item in the agenda, as follows:

1. Who can be buried in the Hebron Cemeteries?

After discussing multiple variations that appear in the rules and regulations of other towns, the Committee settled on the following formulation:

A qualified person would be either (a) an individual who is a resident (as defined by the NH RSA), or (b) an individual who is a taxpayer with respect to a dwelling that is located in Hebron and that he or she has occupied.

The Committee discussed, but did not resolve, the period of time an individual would need to have been a resident or a taxpayer with respect to a dwelling.

The Committee discussed the issue of "when" the individual needed to meet the necessary qualifications. It was tentatively agreed that the date of an individual's passing would be the date of determination, but that there would be an exception for individuals who had moved from Hebron for health reasons.

Because Town Meeting in 2014 gave the Board of Selectmen the duties and responsibilities of Cemetery Trustees, the Rules and Regulations should state that fact early on in the document, and then use the term Cemetery Trustees (or Trustees) thereafter (as opposed to references to a Cemetery Commission). Where a vote is taken, the vote of a majority of the Cemetery Trustees will be the decision of the Trustees.

The Committee discussed that the determination of qualification of an individual and the determination whether an individual met the qualifications at the time of his or her passing was subject to exceptions allowed from time to time by the Cemetery Trustees, with their discretion to be exercised based upon whether the individual was, in substance, significantly connected to Hebron.

The Rules and Regulations should clarify that a couple (whether married or in a civil union) are entitled to two graves, not four.

2. Should we sell the lots?

3. Procedures how to obtain deeds to a lot

4. Fees for the lot and burial costs

The Committee members agreed that there would be no charge for a gravesite (lot). There was also consensus that individuals would not be receiving title to a gravesite, but instead were receiving the right to be buried in a gravesite. Thus, there will be no deeds issued to individuals.

There would be fees for various services performed relative to graves, such as the opening of a gravesite, etc., but the specifics were left for another meeting.

The Committee next discussed the issue of whether an individual would be allowed to reserve a gravesite. After discussing the fact that there has been a practice of allowing individuals to reserve gravesites for twenty years, the following consensus developed:

- reservations would be permitted;
- to make a reservation, the individual would need to select a grave site that is not occupied and is not subject to an existing reservation;
- the individual would need to complete a form that would provide certain relevant information;
- the reservation period would begin on the date that the form was submitted;
- there would be no fee for a reservation;
- to preserve the reservation, the individual would need to arrange to have the Sexton mark the site within one year of the date of the submission of the reservation form; failing to do so would mean that the reservation would lapse;
- there would be a fee [to be determined] for the sextons to do the marking;
- the reservation would be for a period ending on the earlier of (a) the date that is the 20th anniversary of the date of the submission of the reservation form, and (b) the date on which the individual ceased to be qualified to be buried in a town cemetery.

A reservation could be extended beyond 20 years if, during the period between the 19th anniversary and the 20th anniversary, the individual submitted a request to extend, in which case the reservation period would be extended and be for a period

ending on the earlier of (a) the date that is the 40th anniversary of the original date of the submission of the reservation form, and (b) the date on which the individual ceased to be qualified to be buried in a town cemetery.

As to existing possible reservations, the discussion was as follows:

- if the reservation was made within the last 20 years, a notice would be sent to the claimant notifying him or her that, if he or she had not already done so, then he or she had one year from the date of the notice to mark the grave site (using the Sexton and paying for the service), and that failure to do so within the time frame would mean that the reservation would lapse,
- if the reservation was made more than 20 years ago, it would not be recognized.

It was agreed that a reservation would not allow the individual to place a monument or other marker on the gravesite prior to its being used for burial purposes.

5. Perpetual care funds

The Committee agreed that perpetual care would not be provided going forward. It was also discussed that perpetual care currently provides no services in addition to those that are provided to gravesites that are not under perpetual care. As a result, it will be explored as to whether to seek judicial approval of combining the perpetual care monies with the general cemetery funds.

6:30 p.m. Minutes of June 10th meeting approved by unanimous vote

6:35 p.m. Meeting adjourned by unanimous vote

Respectfully submitted,

Ellie Lonske
Secretary *pro tem*