

Minutes – Regular Meeting of Cemetery Trustees, August 26, 2026

Present:

Cemetery Trustees: Nancy Birkrem (Secretary); Ellie Davis, Lynne A. Murray (Chair) and Bill Amaral (alternate)

The above named gathered at the Mascoma Senior Center for a regular meeting of the Cemetery Trustees on August 26, 2026.

A quorum being present, Lynne convened the meeting at 4:35 p.m.

Motion 68. Nancy moved to approved the Aug. 8, 2026 meeting minutes noting that minor edits had been made for clarity. Ellie seconded. Ellie said she disagreed with the description of what was discussed at that meeting regarding the lot boundaries in the Canaan St. Cemetery and, therefore, would not approve the meeting minutes. The vote to approve the minutes was 2 in favor and 1 against.

Bill left the meeting.

Motion 69. Nancy made a motion to “freeze” the Atwell, Jones, Birch Hill and Cobble cemeteries meaning that there would be no further burials or sales of lots in any of them. Lynne seconded. Ellie expressed concern that perhaps the town did not really own all of these cemeteries; Nancy pointed out that we had been maintaining them for over 100 years and it was unlikely we would have done this if we didn’t own them. There was some discussion whether other cemeteries should also be frozen; we agreed to start with these four. The vote to approve was unanimous.

2026 budget review. There was discussion of the Cemetery expenditures as reported through early August. There were surprises. Lynne had found some answers; we hope Bob Henry can shed light on other items. Nancy suggested that perhaps we should insist that no payments (except salaries/benefits) be paid from our accounts without Lynne approving them first. This suggestion was well received, but no further action was taken. Resulting from this discussion--

Motion 70. Nancy made a motion that the Cemetery Trustees send a letter to the town’s Finance Officer directing her to stop the monthly uniform charge. Ellie seconded. There was some discussion about what benefit we were getting for this charge. We noted that we had not approved the expenditure initially nor had it been included in budget discussions last fall. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous. Nancy will draft a letter. [Secretary’s note: the Chair subsequently asked her to hold on sending this letter until we talked to Bob Henry, Public Works Superintendent.]

Tree removal estimate: We discussed at length the two estimates, one from Chippers and one from Thomson. We looked at ways to reduce the cost by scaling back what would be done this year. However, since the total still exceeds what is in the contracted services budget line, Nancy will reach out to Sal Percia of the Budget Cmte to see what our options might be.

Motion 71. Nancy made a motion that we accept the quote for tree work from Thomson Timber Harvesting & Trucking LLC as revised amounting to some \$23,600, subject to confirming availability of funds. Ellie seconded. The vote to approve was unanimous. Nancy will notify both companies of the decision.

General comments: Ellie noted that road work had been done in Canaan Street Cemetery and that it looked good; she hoped it would last.

There was a brief discussion of last week's public hearing on our proposed changes to the Cemetery Ordinances. No one at the hearing had made any objections, and we look forward to getting the signed document back from the Select Board. (See minutes of the Select Board meeting of Aug. 18, 2026 for details.)

Lynne reported that she had unexpectedly found quite a bit of cemetery-related material in the Town Clerk's office. She is sorting it out.

Our next two meetings will be on Sept. 14 and Sept. 28, 2026 (both Mondays).

Motion 72. Nancy made a motion to adjourn the meeting which Lynne seconded. There being no objections, the meeting adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

Submitted by Nancy Birkrem, Secretary.