

Minutes – Regular Meeting of Cemetery Trustees, September 14, 2026

Present:

Cemetery Trustees: Nancy Birkrem (Secretary); Ellie Davis, Lynne A. Murray (Chair)
Town Officials: Scott Johnston (Select Board rep.)

The above named gathered at the Mascoma Senior Center for a regular meeting of the Cemetery Trustees on Sept. 14, 2026.

A quorum being present, Lynne convened the meeting at 4:31 p.m.

Motion 73. Ellie moved to approve the minutes of the Aug. 26, 2026 meeting. Lynne seconded. Nancy called attention to the minor edits that were made for clarity; Ellie suggested an additional edit of the same sort. The vote to approve the minutes was 3 in favor with 1 abstention.

2026 budget review. Nancy said that the revised tree-work quote had been received revealing an error in her math as expressed in Motion 71-- the estimate is \$19,600 *not* \$23,600, meaning we need an additional \$8,600 for contract services. She then went over her conversation with Sal Percia on our options. These are: (1) ask Select Board for permission to overspend the budget, (2) move funds around and see if that can cover the gap, (3) postpone some of the work until 2027 and hope new budget will be adequate, (4) ask Town Admin. to encumber to 2027 whatever funds are unused this year, or (5) some combination of these. After a discussion, including the observation that the expense for Wells Cemetery is completely reimbursable, it was agreed to go with option 1. Lynne and Ellie will present our request at the next Select Board meeting. [Secretary's note: our request was approved; see minutes of the Select Board meeting of Sept. 15, 2026 for details.]

Other business.

Lynne asked Scott about the approval status of the updated ordinances. Scott said he will address this at the next Select Board meeting. [Secretary's note: she received an email from the C. T. Chair shortly before the Select Board meeting that the document had been signed.]

The ongoing monthly uniform charge (a contracted service) remains unresolved. There was some discussion why we were issuing uniforms at all. Everyone agreed that it was appropriate to at least help our employees pay for equipment/clothing that is for their safety but that this monthly charge needs to go away. Lynne will continue to work on this.

Lynne reported on an email she had from Nick Lavalley of the Trustees of Trust Funds. The bottom line was a question from him whether the Cemetery Trustees would like to take over keeping "the information slips (about ¼ page in size) with the purchaser's name, the cemetery name, and the exact plot that has been purchased". Nancy noted that the Cemetery Procedures approved in July 2026 did not mention these slips and should be revised regardless of who keeps the slips.

Motion 74. Scott made a motion that the Cemetery Trustees should keep the plot records. Nancy seconded. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

Records reorganization: At our last meeting, Lynne reported that she had unexpectedly found quite a bit of unfiled cemetery-related material. As a result of reviewing these, she thinks that there probably are owners who never received their copy of the deed; she is working to resolve this. She then presented a schema for reorganizing the files. Step 1 would consolidate all information on plot purchase and use into a single spreadsheet. She only briefly touched on Step 2, which she calls “map digitization and AI integration”.

She also suggested a new deed form that would: (1) provide greater detail on where the plot(s) is/are located, (2) name the people who could be interred in the plot (replacing the *Rights of Interment* document we discussed last year), and (3) move the issuing authority from the Select Board to the Cemetery Trustees. The last item is possible only because State law now allows this. No vote was taken on a revised deed.

Motion 75. Lynne made a motion that we allow her to reorganize the existing cemetery records. Scott seconded. There was lively discussion why this would be a good idea. The vote to approve was unanimous.

In another matter, Lynne reminded us that the wooden post and rail fence at Sawyer Hill Cemetery is falling apart and generally looks unsightly. Note that we did not budget for any fence repairs or replacements for 2026, although it is our intent that this will be done at some point.

Motion 76. Lynne made a motion that we remove the existing fencing at Sawyer Hill, to be replaced in the future. Ellie seconded. The vote to approve was unanimous.

Our next meeting will be on Sept. 28, 2026.

Motion 77. Nancy made a motion to adjourn the meeting which Lynne seconded. There being no objections, the meeting adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

Submitted by Nancy Birkrem, Secretary.