

MINTURN CEMETERY DISTRICT
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
July 12, 2021

Members Present:

John Sheehan
Art Chavez
Stephen Jones

Members Absent:

n/a

Staff:

Sidney Harrington
Ray Sforzo
Matt Mire

I CALL TO ORDER

John called the regular meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. at the Riverview Cemetery Mausoleum, Minturn, CO.

II ROLL CALL

John, Art, Stephen, Ray, Matt and Sidney were present.

III PUBLIC COMMENTS

n/a

IV APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

John motioned to approve the meeting minutes from the May 11, 2021 regular meeting, Art seconded, and all were in favor.

V DISCUSSION

A. Administrator Report:

Sidney reported regular business items to the board regarding landscape budget, the 2021 sales log and the soil sample results.

The cemetery office recently completed the upper cemetery re-mapping project. Peggy helped with this project and the bill is in this month's check run.

Sidney would like for all future landscape staff / management / budget constraint conversations to relate directly to the budget. The landscape budget is healthy and continues to demonstrate that spending falls well below the budgeted dollar amounts for the year 2021.

The cemetery has been very busy this summer and people from outside of Eagle County are buying plots here at Riverview. The database currently shows that there are about 110 ground burial plots remaining for sale in the upper cemetery.

The soil sample results have been evaluated and Mountain Valley Ventures will be adding the appropriate products to help the lawn in the upper cemetery.

B/C. Property Report / Drive-in Gate Operations:

Ray reminded everyone that we used to manage the drive in gate here at the cemetery allowing more access to drive-in compared to what we offer today. There have been some people calling staff for drive-in access. Having staff hang around to close gates isn't ideal.

Ray believes mechanical gates could be a good solution to provided controlled access to drive-in. Ray has some preliminary costs for an electronic gate for the cemetery entry. A more formal estimate is forthcoming; however, the expense amount for just the gate (not including the mandatory expense of bringing electrical power to the gate) is between \$7,000 - \$10,000.

Public Comment:

Jackie Lovato, Minturn resident, has a problem with the drive-in gates being closed, at least on the weekends. She thinks a public cemetery should have gate operation hours. She had to wait thirty minutes for someone to come open up for which she is grateful. Jackie also mentioned that the cemetery rules and regs very clearly state that the District is not liable for damages to headstones. She has a 90-year-old mother who cannot easily walk up the cemetery hill to visit family burials.

Ray said that we are open on Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Sidney reminded everyone that this is only a recent practice.

John said that the District is closing gates to protect the property.

Art mentioned that we are currently bidding out more security cameras.

Mark Gordon asked if we have had security issues and vandalism here in the past. Also, public activity in the area is a good thing and not a bad thing.

Dan Bellm, Minturn resident, said even when the gates are closed, it doesn't really deter anybody who really wants to get in here from getting in. Gates being open indicates that somebody is present.

Art says you can still access cemetery through the walk-in gate. The entire property needs to be protected.

Jackie says shutting down a public cemetery to tax payers isn't ideal. This is the first summer that they have been locked.

John mentioned nationwide cemetery vandalism in the news lately and the concern for being protective.

Jackie understands the security concern but wants access on a regular basis and make it available to the public, put hours on the website and provide a schedule. Jackie says she has tried to call a couple of times to get access without success.

Stephen asked if the walk-in gate is sufficient for Jackie and she said no it is not for her 90-year-old mother.

Mark Gordon, Vail resident, mentioned that typically, the young and spry people aren't swarming the cemetery to buy lots, etc. Mark agrees with the vandalism concern but would still like to see daily drive-in gate hours, i.e., 8-6. He says that the cameras and signage are sufficient to ward off criminal activity and if something happens, we will have it on camera.

Jackie suggested letting the public know that the District is making security improvements, i.e., press release and website.

Sidney stated that we have existing security cameras and signage and it is time to set some drive-in gate hours of operation and is asking for direction from the board. Art suggested Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday (because many holidays fall on Monday). Stephen asked if need to have staff present when gates are open? John says we need to consider Ray's mechanical gates instead. Stephen asked about mechanical and how it adds to security. Ray explains the gates are programmed to open / close and then lock respectively. Sidney says auto-gates save staff-time & labor hours which the board has expressed concern for and is well documented in our minutes. The security cameras and signage already deter vandalism.

Jackie says if someone wants to get in the cemetery they can get in no matter if the gates are locked (just like your home). The cemetery has always been so welcoming and with the gates closed it's not as available to the public.

Sidney asked for a motion to set drive-in gate hours. Stephen doesn't want to see gates opened daily and Art mentioned labor expense concerns for daily operations of gates.

Jackie asked if mechanical gate installation expense would offset labor expense for gate operations and all agreed that yes, it would pay for itself. John has concerns about mechanical gate troubleshooting and would like to get multiple bids from gate companies.

Drive-in gate hours have been set for Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday and holidays.

Mark Gordon asked for clarification that if he needs to come up on a Tuesday, he needs to call for access.

Ray continued his property report regarding burials and says that casket burials are always stressful and difficult and he has done more than 100. Ray is often on “pins & needles” and everything has to go right. The last burial service here was the largest attended burial service ever with over 200 people. Just before the service commenced a subcontractor was on site along with John and Stephen. The meeting was disruptive to the facilitation of the burial service and Ray asked that this never occurs again. Casket burial services are stressful and staff would never schedule a subcontractor meeting or any other kind of meeting during a burial service. Discussion ensued and all agreed that this was not the right timing to meet with subs.

John apologized.

Stephen asked if anyone complained and Ray says someone commented about public restroom access.

Sidney agrees that sub meetings during burials services are not acceptable. Burials are emotional special events. Grieving families tend to take things out on people around them and cemetery staff is often subject to that as the service is taking place.

***Noted for the record, all meetings with contractors need to be scheduled through the cemetery office or property manager. No subcontractor meetings are allowed to be scheduled during burial services. Burial services are reserved for paying respects to the deceased and family only.

B. Shed Building Update w Pedro Campos:

Pedro will be turning in the application for the shed building project along with the \$650 application fee. Staff has been working on the amended final plat after surveying and staking and the continued design review process and utilities considerations. There is no required Town Council design review process but the project will go to the Council for approval of the land transfer and deed for the additional land. There is also a fee of \$650. Pedro says this project has taken a long time due to its uniqueness. Stephen motioned to consent to the new maintenance service yard and shed improvement application. John seconded and all were in favor.

C. RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE MINTURN CEMETERY DISTRICT IN SUPPORT OF A PETITION FOR ADDITION OF PROPERTY TO THE DISTRICT: Matt Mire

Matt reported that the petition is for the Miller Estate property only. Mr. Green did not join the petition. The petition, as we all know, is for the purpose of operating the Old Edwards Cemetery (OEC) as a cemetery and spend District funds. Matt has been working with a “junior” level county attorney who has been slow to respond.

Matt provided the county with a legal analysis and has made sure the language refers to the OEC property as a satellite property of the Minturn Cemetery District. Matt has recommended we file the petition so that the county will be forced to respond.

John asked about burials vs. above ground cremation burials on the property. Cemeteries are considered “special use” in industrial zoned areas and we may have to go through that process as well. We must first receive approval to accept the property into the District. The county could also allow the District to accept the donation and keep it as is. The ultimate goal is to operate it as a modern cemetery. Matt doesn’t believe there could be any other use for the property.

Matt believes that the county has 30 days to respond to the petition.

Stephen motioned to pass Resolution 1 of the board of directors of the Minturn Cemetery District in support of a petition for addition of property to the District. John seconded and all were in favor.

D. MINTURN CEMETERY DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS VACANCY:

Art Chavez and Mark Gordon are applicants for the vacancy. Art stated that he recuses himself because he is a candidate for re-election. Mark Gordon asked Matt if the number of board members is set in the bylaws and Matt said yes that it is because Mark is wondering if board member expansion is possible? Unfortunately it is not possible at this time.

The Board conducted candidate interviews with Art and Mark. John asked Mark why he is interested in the board. Mark has seen the ads for years in the paper and he likes the idea of community and how important it is for him to maintain community in the Town of Vail and beyond. He acknowledged how difficult it is to even have a cemetery in a resort community and it is very important to him to have amenities like a cemetery. Mark did not know that Art was reapplying and Mark is just interested if not for this vacancy, any future vacancies.

Art says he has lived in the community for many generations and his service to the Board speaks for itself.

John would like Art to stay on and says he has passion and enthusiasm.

Stephen likes Art hard work and would also like to see Art stay on.

John motioned to recommend Art Chavez to the Board of County Commissioners for reappointment to the Minturn Cemetery District Board of Directors. Stephen seconded and all were in favor.

Board and staff thanked Mark Gordon and Stephen would like to see Mark attend more board meetings if he interested.

VI. BILL PAYING

The following electronic funds transfers were made:

7/12/2021 EFT Centurylink 272.26

The following checks were signed:

7/12/2021	2903	ABC Parts, Inc.	134.81
7/12/2021	2904	CMNM	45.07
7/12/2021	2884	Defina Construction	500.00
7/12/2021	2885	Eager Beaver	1,200.00
7/12/2021	2886	Eagle Valley Surveying, Inc.	1,198.00
7/12/2021	2887	Firstbank	1,218.02
7/12/2021	2888	Hoffmann, Parker, Wilson & Carberry	1,554.00
7/12/2021	2890	The Home Depot	209.81
7/12/2021	2891	Integrated Technology & Consulting, Inc.	135.00
7/12/2021	2892	Marchetti & Weaver	566.25
7/12/2021	2905	Mountain Valley Ventures, Inc.	1,332.00
7/12/2021	2893	Peggy Peters	1,976.00
7/12/2021	2894	Ramaker	1,100.00
7/12/2021	2895	Rocky Mountain Custom Landscapes	643.04
7/12/2021	2896	Sforzo Enterprises, Inc.	3,487.50
7/12/2021	2897	Sidney Harrington	3,333.00
7/12/2021	2898	Vail Daily	1,874.32
7/12/2021	2899	Vail Honeywagon	108.15
7/12/2021	2900	Vail Valley Landscape Supply	996.35
7/12/2021	2901	Vail Valley Pest Control	400.00
7/12/2021	2902	Xcel Energy	790.21

VII. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Shed building remodel, Two Elk subarea masterplan-TOM, Old Edwards Petition, green burials, water feature, rules & regulations

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:09 p.m. John motioned to adjourn the regular board meeting, Art seconded and all were in favor.

The next regular board meeting date and time will be August 16 at 6:30 pm.

Respectfully Submitted:
Sidney Harrington
Administrator

ATTEST:

Stephen Jones
Minturn Cemetery District
Secretary/Treasurer