

Cemetery approved minutes are from the Board meeting on November 2, 2017 and the Monument sub-committee meeting on November 8, 2017.

Missoula Cemetery Board Meeting
Thursday, November 2, 2017
12:00pm
Missoula City Cemetery Office

Minutes

Present: Kim Seeberger, Paul Filicetti, Mary Lou Cordis, Pat McHugh, Susan Aaberg (City Attorney), John Wilkins (City Council), Tyson Moore (Garden City Funeral Home), Bob and Michelle Jordan (Garden City Monument Services), Ron Regan, Mary Ellen Stubb

Absent: None.

Public comment. None.

Approval of board minutes: October 2017 minutes were unanimously approved as corrected.

Financials. Revenues and expenditures were reviewed.

New or Continuing Items.

POLICIES (Motion required). Policy approval was postponed. A sub-committee will conduct open discussions with the funeral home and monument company before finalizing policies. Any board member willing to be on this committee should contact Mrs. Seeberger.

Mr. Moore said he would give the cemetery monument measurements but could not give a delivery date. He considered the two-day delivery notice ample time for the cemetery to prepare. Mr. Regan voiced concern that Memorial Monuments would wait for a truckload of monuments, deliver them all in one day, and then inform the public that the cemetery is holding up the process of setting those monuments.

Mr. Moore stated it was not feasible to deliver one monument at a time and customers pay extra for shipping. Therefore, they will wait for full load to be delivered. He added that the cemetery is not saving the public money by adding shipping costs. Mr. Moore said the process of ordering a monument consists of pre-verifying the grave so they know if a monument can go in the cemetery, then sitting with a family which could take months before completing an order, then placing the order which could take up to nine months to fabricate the monument, and finally delivering to the cemetery.

Mr. Jordan agreed that 20 days for the pre-verification is not enough time to design a monument and get family approval. Mr. Regan asked how we could accomplish better customer service rather than letting monuments sit in a warehouse for a few months, delivering a truckload at one time, and then blaming the cemetery for the delay in setting. Mr. Moore said he was not trying to make anyone look bad. He will tell families when the monument arrives and ask the cemetery to give an estimated set time.

Mr. Regan stressed that communication is the biggest key to making this work smoothly for the families. Mr. Moore agreed that the battle was over and everyone needs to work together, but he wants to make some common sense suggestions since the cemetery has never done this before.

Mrs. Jordan said she will bring the permit and fees to the cemetery as soon as the sale is complete. Mr. Regan said he wants to avoid past issues when foundations were placed, the family backed out of the sale, and then the cemetery had to pull the foundation and re-sod the grave. Mr. Moore noted that if the cemetery is setting year-round then it makes sense to place foundations ahead of the monument.

Mr. Regan suggested he sit down with Mr. Moore and Mr. Jordan to figure out delivery and timing. Mr. Moore agreed but wanted board presence at the discussion. Mr. Regan stressed that communication is important.

The cemetery wants to pre-set foundations once the monument is sold and wants to avoid past communication issues. He referred to a situation where a matching monument request turned into a bench which then showed up as a park bench when it was delivered. The cemetery does not want to risk having to re-do foundations. An open conversation is needed. Mr. Wilkins suggested the board form a subcommittee for this discussion. Ms. Aaberg will attend the proposed meeting. **MOTION: Mr. Filicetti moved to form a subcommittee to discuss monument policies and bring those policies back to the board for approval. Mrs. Cordis seconded. Ayes, 4.**

MONUMENT SETTING (Tyson Moore, Garden City Funeral Home). Mrs. Seeberger noted this conversation will be done through the subcommittee.

SILVER PARK IRON STORAGE. Five years ago, MRA requested the cemetery store old mill iron intended for use in Silver Park. This pile remains and is now promoting weeds and rock chucks. MRA states the Public Art Committee is in charge of this. Mr. Filicetti will contact the committee. Mr. Regan noted that if they plan to use the items then the pile can remain but if not, then it should be removed.

MASTER PLAN. Mr. Filicetti suggested the board look at the entire cemetery and account for its needs, future expectations, and direction. A master plan needs to look at the cemetery as a whole in terms of buildings, structures, and services needed now and in the future. Examples are placement of wells for irrigation, a new office building, and future columbariums. Mrs. Cordis stressed the importance of preserving cemetery land.

There was much discussion about reaching out to MRA, possible funding sources, and developers involved in the Scott Street District. That proposal calls for a land swap of cemetery ground. Mr. Wilkins encouraged the cemetery to lay out a road map to work toward that included a new building and future cemetery improvements.

Mrs. Seeberger stated the board needs to plan for improvements, expansion, and maintenance by being proactive rather than reactive. It is really important to invest time and energy to look at the whole picture not just parts of it. She has been researching what master plans involve and has created a booklet of cemeteries that have done them, what they looked at and addressed, and their ideas. This will take a lot of time and effort and she expects work will be ongoing over the next months. Ms. Aaberg suggested the board form a subcommittee for the master plan.

Mr. Filicetti and Mr. McHugh felt hiring a consultant to assist with this process would be the more efficient option. Mr. Wilkins noted this would need put out to bid. Mr. Regan asked about the possibility of a donation of services for this. The concern expressed was that donated services can sometimes diminish the importance of the process. Soliciting requests for a master plan brings more credibility to the entire process. Ms. Aaberg said she will make some initial inquiries with the city clerk about this process.

Informational Items.

STORIES AND STONES REPORT. The final cost and revenue report was given to board members.

NEW COLUMBARIUM PLAZA UPDATE. There is about 20 yards of concrete left to pour in the center but weather has been an issue. The pond liner was ordered through Hunton. The cost was about \$300 higher than pouring the liner ourselves but worth the money. The liner should be set next week.

CHIP SEALING STREETS. The updated cost for material to chip seal the roads east of Russell Street is \$16,000 - \$16,500. Mr. Regan spoke with Dale Bickell about the cost and the use of cemetery land. Mr. Bickell will see what administration can do to help with this. Mrs. Cordis said there was a past agreement that allowed departments to store material on cemetery land in exchange for helping the cemetery with paving and other needs. Mr. Regan said his understanding was that city budgets have tightened so departments no longer have material and labor services that they can exchange. He suggested the cemetery consider charging departments that use cemetery land for storage. This item needs included in the FY19 budget process.

BOARD VACANCY. Position remains open.

CIVIL WAR STONE CLEANING. Mr. Dolan was unable to attend. Cemetery GAR information is to be forwarded to Ms. Aaberg.

CEMETERY BY-LAWS (Item not on the agenda). Ms. Aaberg is researching and writing by-laws for the cemetery board that could help with operation of meetings. She plans to have a draft ready for board review next month. Mrs. Stubb noted that the original 1901 by-laws are the only ones on record. Most of that original information was incorporated into cemetery ordinance over the years. Ms. Aaberg is checking with the city clerk to determine if we need to amend those 1901 by-laws or adopt new ones.

Public comment. None.

Adjournment at 1:02pm. Next meeting will be December 7, 2017.

Respectfully submitted by Mary Ellen Stubb

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Missoula Cemetery Monument Sub-Committee Meeting
Wednesday, November 8, 2017
3:30pm
Missoula City Cemetery Office

#1 - Discussion on monument process, policies, and forms.

Present: Rick Evans & Tyson Moore (Garden City Funeral Home), Bob & Michelle Jordan (Garden City Monument Services), Susan Aaberg (City Attorney), Paul Filicetti (Cemetery Board Co-Chair), Ron Regan, Mary Ellen Stubb

Pre-verification. Only change to current practice: Cemetery now requires family contact information. The cemetery needs to contact a family directly rather than through a third party for things like bushes, existing stones, or tree issues.

Michelle objected because these are their families. Ron stated they are our families too.

Tyson objected because the monument is his responsibility and if he messes up then he needs to be the one to contact the family. Bob objected because he wants monument issues to come to him instead of the cemetery making a three-way deal out of things.

Rick preferred the cemetery use the interment contact but then agreed that this was not always the same contact. He questioned family authority but Ron noted our rules are the same as his rules. We allow the owner, sons, and daughters to make decisions.

Susan did not understand the objections to the cemetery having contact information.

Ron said if the monument is wrong then that is a monument company problem and people need to go there. The cemetery needs contact information so the family can sometimes sign off on a release. He gave the example of one woman who took liability for placing a monument on a short grave in an alleyway. In this case, the monument sits on top of the grave and needs moved to place a casket. There is some potential monument liability if the burial happens during the winter. The cemetery met with the woman, she understood the situation, and signed a release stating she took full responsibility for the monument. Rick agreed this was a smart thing to do.

Ron said the cemetery would contact the family for situations like existing monuments, slope of grave, bushes, etc. The main point is open communication.

Rick decided the pre-verification was self-explanatory and fair. Tyson agreed with giving family contact information as long as the cemetery agreed to contact the family for ground conditions but not about the monument. Michelle still questioned the need to give family contact information to the cemetery.

Leveling stones.

Michelle and Bob objected to the cemetery leveling stones instead of them. Ron said families come to the cemetery and we do these things now. Raising and leveling existing monuments is a cemetery deal and has nothing to do with selling monuments.

Rick and Michelle agreed that the cemetery should handle all the leveling and raising because it is a grounds issue.

Bob questioned why the cemetery would not call him instead. Ron explained that in the past Bob has not wanted to deal with these situations and told the family it would cost them a substantial amount of money to fix this. What happens then is the family complains to the cemetery and the cemetery ends up fixing these. The cemetery will now take care of all the trip hazards, elevation of land, leveling, bushes, etc. This will be done through direct contact with the family which saves the family time and money. Each situation is at cemetery discretion when to contact the family to discuss what they want the cemetery to do. These are part of everyday cemetery business. Ron gave the example of the hickey the cemetery set during the recent disinterment process. Rick commended the cemetery on the nice job they did with that monument.

Monument Delivery. Tyson objected to the cemetery contacting families when a monument is delivered or set. He wants to inspect the setting and then contact the family himself.

This led to discussion about the Anderson stone. This stone met mow strip requirements but it was not set or putted properly. Memorial Monuments corrected this but Tyson never did an inspection.

Paul noted cemetery policy states that upon completion, the cemetery will contact both the family contact and the monument company.

Michelle is okay with delivery sign off.

Memorial Placement Cut-off Date. April 15 allows the cemetery time to set before Memorial Day.

Rick asked the cemetery to extend that date because stones get set right up to three days before Memorial Day and families wait until last minute to finalize their decisions. He suggested the cemetery leave the date out and simply say the cemetery would make every attempt to set monuments by Memorial Day. Paul agreed the date really would not matter.

Clarification was made that the April 15 cutoff date Memorial Monuments uses is for ordering, not for setting.

Ron said the cemetery would make every attempt to have monuments set by Memorial Day just like we do for flower care. He needs notice to manage time and crew. Paul said the only thing would be burials that take place during this timeframe. Rick understands if monuments cannot be set due to burials, which is why there should not be a date.

Tyson said by placing a date, the cemetery will have to guarantee everything brought by that date will be installed by Memorial Day. Even with a date, though, there is no guarantee all the monuments will get in by Memorial Day. Susan said that is the reason to give notice.

Ron questioned why they were so against having a cutoff date. Rick was worried whoever took over for Ron would hold firm to that date rather than try to set by Memorial Day. Also, he knows that things can go wrong that hold up monument setting. He then referred to a past business licensing issue with Memorial Monuments.

Tyson said this cutoff date is too early for dropping off monuments. Seventy-five percent of their monuments will be sold and set during the 45-day stretch before Memorial Day. Ron said he had a hard time

believing that they sold 75% of their monuments all at one time rather than selling all year long. Tyson said now that the cemetery is going to set year round that may change, but historically in weather like here, they do not set in the winter due to frost. The majority of their monument business is done in April and May.

Ron said a big difference here is that we set on the head of a grave which is virgin ground and we fix the ground for settling. Tyson understands that but the majority of monument sets will be in those days. Bob said the majority of his families wait until after tax season to purchase.

Tyson warned that the cemetery would be cutting out a lot of folks if the 45-day policy sticks. Rick agreed and said they do not want a date. Ron said he does not want companies to hold monuments and then show up here with 30 at one time to set. Rick and Tyson said that was the business and it will happen.

Susan suggested the monument permit say that monuments delivered by April 15 will be set by Memorial Day. After that date, the cemetery will make every attempt to set by Memorial Day. Tyson, Rick, Bob, and Michelle agreed this was fair.

Delivery notice. Susan suggested one way to help the cemetery prepare is to have the estimated delivery date so Ron has an idea what is coming in and when.

Tyson said he understood that the pre-verification lets them know if a monument can go on a grave site but this does not mean the monument is sold, therefore, he cannot give an exact delivery date.

Ron said that companies should know within 60 days if the monument is sold and can give the cemetery an estimated delivery date. Susan agreed and stated that the cemetery asking companies to try to help them out by providing a date for Memorial Day delivery is fair. The companies should be able to provide something which would allow Ron to manage his resources. If not on the pre-verification then they should suggest another idea how to get the cemetery that information.

Tyson noted the estimated delivery dates he gives are going to be way off. Monument suppliers send an automated date that is about 12 weeks out but the monument could show up in 6-8 weeks. Supplying that date will give the cemetery a rough idea when a monument may be coming.

Ron said the date request was simplified by asking for an estimated date on the permit. Tyson agreed and said he could give that date.

Permit. Tyson questioned the timing for the permit which will now be way in advance of the monument delivery. Ron said the companies had all stated that bringing the permit and fees when the monument is sold would not be a problem. So all fees are due in one check along with the permit once the monument is sold.

Tyson warned that removing the original two-day delivery notice may have gone too far in the cemetery not helping itself out. He felt the cemetery needed delivery notice or what would prevent their companies from calling as they turned into the parking lot because that would be notice. He felt the two-day notice was fair.

Ron stated the cemetery had listened to their concerns and tried to solve some of them here. He wanted to leave delivery notice open so that on a bad weather day the monument companies could deliver monuments rather than the cemetery holding firm on a two-day notice. He was expecting open communication and common courtesy to work together.

Rick agreed and said everyone know they should call the cemetery in advance.

Ron stressed again that the cemetery was trying to consolidate the process and needs open communication. Rick said the cemetery did good at what was proposed.

Permit Fee. Tyson objected to the permit fee. He stated the cemetery should not be charging a permit fee when the cemetery is doing the setting. He wants this noted for future discussion. He understood the permit fee was for the cemetery to go out and paint the stripe showing the companies where to set the monument. Ron noted the cemetery did reduce the fee but that the fee covers more than just marking a grave.

Foundation Setting Fee. Tyson objected to the foundation and setting fee. He said he went the rounds in Council over the cemetery allowing a granite foundation in place of concrete. He wants the concrete foundation cost deducted from the cemetery setting fee. He feels a family is charged twice and he wants this noted for future discussion.

Ron said the cemetery requires a concrete foundation, but if companies want to upsell a granite foundation to a family that was their choice. The ordinance clearly says concrete or granite foundations are allowed. Cemetery fees were approved by Council and include a concrete foundation. There is no flexibility in fees. The setting fee includes a concrete foundation whether it is used or not.

Tyson then directed his comments to Paul and stated that he looked forward to the board considering this and knows it would require going back to Council, but if these cemetery changes were truly all about the family and saving them money then the cemetery cannot double charge them. Granite foundations save the family money in the end.

Ron said cemetery research shows granite is more expensive for families to purchase. The idea that granite lasts longer than concrete is debatable. Companies differ in their opinions on the heating and cooling of granite foundations versus concrete.

Susan said this was something the board could look at down the road.

Bob questioned the foundation sizes. Ron explained the cemetery will stock each of the foundation sizes listed on the fee schedule. Variances will be poured when the estimated delivery time is known. The standard foundation sizes will be used even when at times a smaller monument is used and there may be excess foundation.

Policies. Ron explained that all cemetery monument policies are combined onto one form to simplify things. Setting this in policy gives everyone a chance to see what works and what does not work. This will get figured out fast and we can come back to the table and change things. Placing this information into ordinance gives us no wiggle room to change. We will try to do policy and work together but again, that needs open communication. Rick agreed that keeping policies out of the ordinance benefits everyone.

Variance. Variance wording is in the ordinance and cannot be changed. Variances used to be done on a handshake but now need to be in writing with a drawing. There is not a charge for a variance. However, a larger foundation would be a different fee.

Tyson was okay with this, it looked pretty easy, and he clarified that the required drawing is the physical dimensions of the monument and that the description is what the variance is from current rules. Ron agreed and gave an example that using a 16-inch hearth would need a variance. Rick agreed and gave the Hightower example.

Susan suggested the variance form list the ordinance language twice. Once at the top and again before the drawing request so that attention is drawn to the drawing requirements. This will be important especially when families handle their own monument variance requests. Tyson and Rick agreed.

Bob questioned the need for a variance at time of pre-verification versus when a monument arrives in his shop. He said special orders can take 120 days to arrive and then the stone can measure up to an inch difference from what was ordered. He wants the ability to apply for a variance at that time. Bob said he cannot control the dimensions.

Rick agreed and said the industry standard will be up to two inches off sometimes.

Ron said the trouble is when the monument length gets ordered at max size. Width depends on whether both people are in the grave and that needs communication. The cemetery is not going to set a foundation until the company is sure of the measurements. The cemetery will go with measurements when a monument is taken out of stock on hand. If it is a special order then the cemetery will not set a foundation until the monument comes

in. Tyson questioned what would happen if the supplier cuts the monument so far off that it does not work. Ron said if companies order something that cannot work on a site then the company is stuck with it.

Susan noted that a variance should be submitted before the monument is sold.

Michelle asked how a variance works when one person still living. Ron said again the length is the issue. Width is fine when both parties are in the grave but in some cases a family may need to sign off and take responsibility for the future burial.

Height. Rick and Tyson questioned the 36-inch height restriction.

Ron explained that monuments like the Bradford or Greil in the D-section cause irrigation issues because the water cannot get over the monuments which then causes dry spots.

Tyson asked if there were areas in the cemetery that would be better to fit a larger monument. Ron said there were as long as there were no sprinkler heads in the rows like in the D-section. Ron said he would like to re-do the irrigation system in the D-section as part of the master plan so that when a large monument is requested, it does not sit on top of the irrigation line.

Delivery. Tyson asked about the delivery checklist. Ron said this was an internal document that would be sent to them along with pictures of the monument. Paul clarified that the permit form talks about acceptance in the policy information.

Vases. There was much discussion on pinning vases versus gluing them.

Tyson questioned who was going to drill the holes and how vases should be pinned. He prefers to glue them because if a vase gets hit, the vase will fall off but does not break versus having the pin snap off and break the vase. He understands that glue gets brittle and vases fall off but prefers glue over pinning.

Ron noted there were pros and cons with both methods. The cemetery asks that the hearth or base is pre-drilled with lugs set before delivery and then the cemetery will install the vases.

Michelle verified that the cemetery would glue the vases. Ron said the cemetery will glue and putty vases but it is the monument company that needs to have the hole drilled and the lugs place. This type of vase also allows families to remove them during the winter to prevent breaking.

Paul asked how often a vase gets hit and knocked off. Tyson said whenever the mower does it. Ron said even a weed eater can tap a vase and it will break. The biggest problem the cemetery sees is when families over stuff the vases full of flowers and then the wind takes them off. Bob agreed that over-stuffing vases with flowers is the biggest culprit to broken vases.

Bob asked who would drill the hole and set the lug when a family orders vases after the monument is set. Ron said he did not have an answer on that one but it would be a discussion for the future.

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The meeting ended with Tyson, Rick, Bob, and Michelle in agreement with the changes and forms. Rick said these were good changes and this was a good discussion.

Rick left saying he still objects to the second interment right, understands it is in the ordinance, but wants a future discussion on it.

Tyson left saying he wants to see the equipment the cemetery uses to set monuments and come watch the cemetery set one. He believes that is a fair request.