Cemetery Meeting Minutes

Cemetery Trustees & DPW Staff

June 25, 2026

The meeting was called to order in the Sunnycrest Conference Room in the Town Hall at 6:05pm.

In attendance:

Cemetery Trustees –Cara Dunn (2029) & Laura El Azem (2028)

Town Staff - Dave Wholley, Denise Manella & Justin Campo

Residents – Ann Champa & Robin Stewart

Old Business

Pleasant View Cemetery Land Donation: There is a parcel of land (7 Litchfield Road) that goes right up to the back side of Pleasant View Cemetery. The developer wants to donate the land to the cemetery for possible expansion. There are no stipulations. Having the land will help protect this historic cemetery. All 3 Cemetery Trustees are in favor of accepting the land donation. Dave has not heard from the developer. **This item is closed.**

36 Gilcreast Road: This is a new development, with 250 rental homes, that abuts Pillsbury Cemetery. Dave spoke to the builders about a barrier between the houses and the cemetery. He suggested an earthen berm or a grassy knoll that would function as a natural landscape barrier. Construction is in progress. **This item is open.**

Signs for all Cemeteries: The purpose of this project is to make the signs uniform at all 7 cemeteries in Londonderry. The design is done. This item was not discussed but remains open. **This item is open.**

Columbariums: A columbarium is a structure with niches for holding urns containing cremated remains. Its function is to provide a compact, dignified, and permanent resting place for the deceased. The biggest problem with a columbarium is the upfront cost associated with it.

More research will need to be done. This will be on hold and will be explored further in the future. This item was not discussed but remains open. **This item is open.**

Descendant Burials: There are occasions when plots are sold and everyone on the deed is deceased. This can cause issues because we do not know who is supposed to be buried in the lot. We will find a procedure to deal with these instances. At this time, the descendant will have to prove that they have rights to the lot. Cara compiled information from other towns. They require a will, probate records and burial/death records showing familial ties. The trustees need to decide the criteria and how to put the language into the Cemetery Rules & Regulations. **This item is open.**

Purchase of Cemetery Plots by Former Londonderry Residents: Plots are sold to current Londonderry residents only. We have gotten many inquiries about purchasing plots by former Londonderry Residents. The trustees need to decide the criteria and how to put the language into the Cemetery Rules & Regulations. Also, the Cemetery Trustees need to check to see if the Cemetery Sexton has the final say on former resident plot purchases. **This item is open.**

Green Burials: Green burials are an environmentally friendly alternative to traditional funerals that return the body to the earth naturally, without embalming, vaults, or toxic materials. Key characteristics include using a biodegradable container or shroud, and a burial that enriches the soil. These burials can be more affordable, save on resources, and may be offered in dedicated natural burial grounds or in specific sections of traditional cemeteries. No one in New Hampshire does Green Burials. We have had no requests for Green Burials in Londonderry. Cemetery Trustees need to discuss whether they want to have this type of burial available in the future.

This item is open.

New Business

Maintenance Expense Request: Justin Campo, Finance Director, requested $25,000 from the Cemetery Trust Fund to cover maintenance expenses. The money covers the work that Shady Hill and Trimmers do in all the cemeteries in town. Cemetery Trustees, Cara Dunn and Laura El Azem agreed to release the $25,000 from the Cemetery Trust Fund. **This item is closed.**

Interments, Plot Sales & Available Plots:

- There have been 17 burials since the cemeteries opened in April. This includes 7 full casket burials and 10 urn burials.
- This year, we have sold 2 double plots & 4 single plots.
- There are currently 40 double plots & 9 single plots available.

This item is closed.

Cemetery Expansion: Expansion will be discussed further in the Fall. At that time, we will put it out to bid. Spring 2027 will be the target date for expansion. The area is already prepped for expansion. It needs to be graded to make it flat, and some drainage needs to be added. It is a simple project. We will investigate adding some parking spaces when doing the expansion.

This item is open.

Cemetery Fee Structure: The Town Council needs to adopt the fee structure for the cemetery. Even though the Cemetery Trustees have approved it in the past, it still needs to go through the Town Council. The Town Manager has alerted the Town Council that this needs to be done soon. **This item is open.**

Winter Snow Removal: There was lots of attention on social media over the winter about snow removal at Pillsbury Cemetery. We have never done snow removal at any cemetery in Londonderry in the winter. We don't do year-round burials. Winter maintenance would be an expensive proposition. It would require a warrant article and vote to add staff & equipment. The person who originally complained about snow removal also complained about lawn maintenance. He was upset because the lawn company had to weed whack behind his headstone. He was warned not to put anything behind his headstone, but he refused to listen or follow the rules. He created the maintenance issue. The lawn company has no choice but to weed whack in that area. The cemetery sexton will have to address this issue.

This item is open.

Structure of Cemetery Trustees: The Cemetery Trustees need to elect a chair. We will invite Kirsten Hildonen to the next meeting to discuss the role of the Cemetery Trustees.

This item is open.

Enforcing Rules at Cemeteries: The Cemetery Trustees would like the Cemetery Sexton to address the issue of people breaking the rules at the cemeteries. The rules need to be enforced. Dave will speak to Bo Butler about this matter.

This item is open.

Robin Stewart Concerns:

- She would like the lawn maintenance company to use a bagger when mowing to keep the grass off headstones.
    - Using a bagger would increase lawn maintenance costs. This is because the grass clippings act as fertilizer and keeps grass moist. We have no irrigation or fertilization at any cemetery. If the lawn clippings were bagged, it would cause the lawn to burn.
- Can a trash barrel be placed at Pillsbury Cemetery?
    - There are not enough staff to keep an eye on a trash receptacle. We can't leave a barrel on the street all week. It will get used inappropriately or disappear.
- Why is Pillsbury Cemetery closed all winter when the other cemeteries are not?
    - Inappropriate activities have taken place there in the past. Pillsbury Cemetery is in a remote location. Chains were put in place to provide protection. The chains go up after the first significant snowfall and are removed when the ground is not too soggy. If the chains are removed during the winter, there will be a cost if things go wrong. Glenwood Cemetery and Pleasant View Cemetery are in a more heavily traveled area and do not require chains.
- Can the chains at Pillsbury Cemetery be removed more often?
    - We try to remove them for winter holidays if the ground is clear. Robin can speak to Bo Butler to request that the chains be removed more often.
- Why can't Pillsbury Cemetery be shoveled by residents in the winter?
    - The Town of Londonderry would be liable for any accidents that happen while people are on town property. The cemeteries are pass at your own risk. Therefore, if they are shoveled, it will be perceived that the path is safe.

Ann Champa Concerns:

- Elizabeth Wallace's footstone at Pinkerton Cemetery needs to be stood up.
- She would like to have Dave look at the faded signs outside of the cemeteries.
- Can a parcel of land on Dragonfly Way be purchased for future cemetery expansion.
    - This will have to be investigated in the future.

Cara motioned to adjourn the meeting. Laura seconded the motion. All in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:47pm.

The next meeting will take place on **Tuesday, July 21, 2026, at 6pm** in the **Merrill Conference Room** (upstairs) in the Town Hall.

Minutes Recorded By: Denise Manella

Date Submitted: 7/1/26