MCC Members

Gary Lamell: Present
Janet McKinstry:Present
Hannah Brown: Present

Middlesex Cemetery Commission
Regular and Organizational Meeting
5:30 pm, Thursday May 8, 2025
Middlesex Town Hall and via Zoom
5 Church St. Middlesex, VT 05602
(802) 223-5915

Minutes

Attendees: Janet McKinstry, MCC; Gary Lamell, MCC; Hannah Brown, MCC; Chris McVeigh, resident of Middlesex; Larry Rooney, Middlesex Select Board; Robert Beach, resident of Mansfield, CT; Stacey Skadberg, Middlesex Select Board; Aric Brown, resident of Middlesex.

5:30pm: Call to order, Amendments, Welcome guests

Janet McKinstry called the hybrid (Zoom and in-person) meeting to order at 5:30 pm. With discussion from Chris McVeigh and Larry Rooney, discussion was held as to the appropriate procedure for electing commission officers, given the absence of an outgoing chair. Larry Rooney confirmed that a nomination must be seconded. Chris McVeigh added that all votes must be recorded, yeas and nays.

5:35 pm: Organizational Meeting

- Appointment of MCC Chair: Motion: Gary Lamell moved to nominate Janet McKinstry as MCC Chair. Discussion was held as to the duties of the Chairperson; Hannah Brown emphasized the need for clear communication and reasonable response time, as well as basic familiarity with email and computer functions. Janet indicated she would be willing to gain the skills necessary to carry out the functions of Chair. Motion seconded by Janet McKinstry. All those in favor: Janet McKinstry, Gary Lamell. All those opposed: Hannah Brown. The motion carried.
- Appointment of MCC Vice Chair: Janet McKinstry moved to nominate Gary Lamell as vice chair. Gary questioned whether a vice chair was necessary. Hannah Brown commented that the vice chair carries out the chairperson's duties in the event of their absence. Hannah Brown seconded the motion. All those in favor: Janet McKinstry, Gary Lamell, Hannah Brown. None opposed; the motion carried.
- Appointment of MCC Secretary: Hannah Brown moved to nominate herself as secretary. Gary Lamell seconded the motion. All those in favor: Janet McKinstry, Gary Lamell, Hannah Brown. None opposed; the motion carried.
- Establishment of regular MCC meetings: Discussion involving Janet, Hannah, Gary, Chris McVeigh, and Larry Rooney was held discussing the active season of the Middlesex Cemetery Commission. Factors discussed included the mowing season, the need for an organizational meeting within a month of Town Meeting in March, how frequently the commission would need to meet, and how cemetery site visits might be incorporated into regular meetings. Larry Rooney offered the suggestion of meeting at a cemetery first as a site visit and then moving to town hall; Chris McVeigh emphasized the importance of warning the details of meeting locations in the public warning. Hannah Brown offered the third Thursday of every other month during the active season. Janet McKinstry specified

that this would be March, May, July, and September. Janet McKinstry asked for a motion that this be the meeting schedule. Gary Lamell seconded the motion. All in favor: Janet McKinstry, Gary Lamell, Hannah Brown. The motion carried.

Regular Meeting

6:00 pm: Review RFP and bids for 2025 mowing season: The MCC, along with Chris McVeigh and Larry Rooney, discussed the conflict of interest involved in discussing mowing bids, as one of the bids was entered by Gary Lamell's son-in-law. Gary Lamell recused himself from the decision. Chris McVeigh and Larry Rooney added that if someone has recused themselves from a decision, they also cannot take part in the discussion thereof. Chris McVeigh suggested many people in such a circumstance actually leave the room so as not to give the appearance of any interference. Hannah Brown discussed that recusing oneself is not a reflection of someone's bias, that Gary's vast experience with cemetery maintenance would be missed, and that it would be important that the MCC's decision be regarded as fair and legitimate. Gary Lamell recused himself and left the meeting room. Janet McKinstry and Hannah Brown discussed how to evaluate the mowing bids, and talked about a scoring matrix. Janet McKinstry indicated she needed more time to read and research the bids. Hannah Brown moved to table the awarding of bids and meet the following week, 5/12/25 at 5:15 pm. Janet McKinstry seconded the motion. All in favor: Hannah Brown, Janet McKinstry. None opposed; the motion carried. Gary returned and was updated as to the proceedings.

6:15 pm: Other MCC business

- Discuss RFP for digging: A discussion was carried out with the MCC, Chris McVeigh, and Larry Rooney, as to whether an RFP and bidding process would be required for grave digging. Gary Lamell added that Bill May usually does the digging, and that a decision will have to be made soon as the first burial in North Branch Cemetery will take place on June 7th. Robert Beach (guest, Barre) asked who provides the money for these services. Gary and Janet answered that the family of the deceased pays the funeral home, who then contacts Gary, who schedules and pays the grave digger. It was concluded that although the Town of Middlesex does not pay the grave digger, they are the ones deciding who will receive payment. As such, a bidding process may be necessary. Hannah Brown offered to be in touch with Charlie Merriman and the Middlesex Town Attorney to inquire about the proper procedure. Hannah Brown moved to table the awarding of a grave digging bid until the 5/12/25 meeting. Gary Lamell seconded the motion. All in favor: Janet McKinstry, Gary Lamell, Hannah Brown. None opposed; the motion carried.
- Discuss cemetery walk-throughs and special concerns
    - Carr Cemetery wash-out: The MCC discussed that the washout at Carr Cemetery would prevent a mower from entering the cemetery, but that a trimmer could be walked over the washout. Janet and Gary indicated that Bill May repaired the previous washout, but that because of the larger culvert installed, without changing its outlet location, repeated washouts could be expected with heavy rain. Hannah Brown added that one of the granite corner posts was very close to being undercut. The MCC agreed a proper repair should be made in a timely manner. The MCC

agreed that Zara Vincent and Eric Metivier should be made aware of the situation, and their opinions sought out. Hannah Brown wondered if this repair, given that it was a result of the 2023 and 2024 floods, could be added to the FEMA reimbursements. Hannah Brown offered to contact Zara and Eric. Gary Lamell indicated he could meet Eric at the washout anytime.

    - Arborist needed at North Branch Cemetery: Hannah Brown mentioned a problem tree right outside the boundary of North Branch Cemetery. Gary Lamell added there were seven trees he knew of that needed to come down. Appropriate procedures for bidding out tree service were discussed; Hannah Brown offered to craft an RFP for this purpose. Stacey Skadberg (Middlesex Select Board, present via Zoom) added that the MCC should obtain permission in writing from landowners before removing significant parts of trees, or entire trees. She informed the MCC of the severity of timber trespass. Gary Lamell indicated he was Tree Warden; he commented that he had known the landowner for years and had never had any problems. The MCC agreed to discuss obtaining permission at a subsequent meeting.

- Discuss location of MCC records: Hannah Brown opened the discussion by saying she had a difficult time obtaining previous receipts and contracts the MCC made in the past. She asked where physical records for the MCC were kept. Janet McKinstry said they should be in the vault at Town Hall. Chris McVeigh suggested putting down a procedure to be sure records were kept appropriately from this point onward. The MCC agreed to keep physical copies of all records at Town Hall. Hannah Brown offered to contact Town Clerk Cheryl Grandfield about setting up a Google Drive or iCloud folder at town hall. Stacey Skadberg suggested this would be appropriate. Chris McVeigh brought up the fact that all email containing MCC business was discoverable, and suggested that municipal emails may be helpful in separating MCC business from personal email.

7:00 pm: Any other matters that come before the Commission: Gary Lamell and Janet McKinstry brought up the possibility of making the MCC a five-person commission. Janet suggested the MCC could increase its own size and two new members. Stacey Skadberg added that the commission, since it is a public body of the town, cannot change its structure without select board approval, or maybe even by referendum and a town vote. Hannah Brown clarified that Stacey was not saying the select board could appoint MCC members, just that the MCC could not change its own structure without town approval. All MCC members agreed that a five-person commission could navigate its duties better than a three-person. It was agreed that the commission will continue to research what is needed for the commission to change its structure.

7:15 pm: Public comment period, Adjourn meeting: No public comments. Hannah Brown moved to adjourn the meeting. Gary Lamell seconded the motion. All in favor: Janet McKinstry, Gary Lamell, Hannah Brown. None opposed; the motion carried. Meeting was adjourned.