

DIVISION OF CEMETERIES

STATE OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
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CEMETERY BOARD
ROBERT J. RODRIGUEZ
SECRETARY OF STATE
CHAIR

LETITIA JAMES
ATTORNEY GENERAL

JAMES V. McDONALD, M.D., M.P.H.
COMMISSIONER OF HEALTH

Cemetery Board Minutes October 18, 2023

Department of State
One Commerce Plaza, 99 Washington Avenue Albany, New York 12231

Office of the New York Attorney General 44 South Broadway
White Plains, New York 10601

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mark Pattison, Department of State, Chair
General Thomas Fuller, Department of Health

Jill Faber, Office of the New York Attorney

OTHER ATTENDEES:

Kathleen Chittenden, Division of Cemeteries
Sarah Levin, Division of Cemeteries
Lewis Polishook, Division of Cemeteries
Brendon Stanton, Division of Cemeteries
Robert Vanderbles, Department of State
Kerry Forezzi, Division of Cemeteries
Leonard Breen, Division of Cemeteries
Joseph Ambrose, Department of State

John Fatato, Department of State
Nathan McCarthy, Division of Cemeteries
Michael Seelman, Division of Cemeteries
Steven Troutman, Division of Cemeteries
Alicia Young, Division of Cemeteries
Natesha Salmon, Division of Cemeteries
Emmanuel Blugh, Division of Cemeteries

GUESTS:

David Fleming, Featherstonhaugh, Wiley & Clyne, for NYS Ass'n of Cemeteries
Nate Romagnola, White Haven Memorial Park
Linda M Jones
Brendan Boyle, Feathersonhaugh, Wiley & Clyne, for NYS Ass'n of Cemeteries
Rich Moylan, Green-Wood Cemetery
JoAnne
Robert Williams
Tom Chris

Some "guests" attended solely via WebEx phone call-in; their names may not be listed above.

Opening Remarks

Mr. Pattison called the meeting to order at 10:31 a.m. Mr. Pattison introduced himself and had the other Board members and Division staff introduce themselves.



Department
of State

23-09-A-51- Minutes of Previous Meetings

A motion was made, seconded, and unanimously adopted approving the minutes of the September meeting as distributed.

23-09-B-52-Legislation and Regulation

1. Pending Legislation

No update.

2. Regulations

The public comment period for regulations about natural organic reduction is open and ends October 23, 2023, and we have received comments. The Division will draft a response to the comments.

23-09-C-54-Division Report

Mr. Polishook reviewed past and upcoming Cemetery 101 sessions across the state. The session at the October 17 NYSAC regional meeting was very well-received and attended. Upcoming sessions include one at Green-Wood Cemetery on Oct 24, one at Mount Pleasant Cemetery in Suffolk County on November 2nd, and one in Queensbury on Nov 14. Cemetery 101 slides are being reviewed to be posted online.

We are working on filling Senior Accountant vacancies in Albany and Syracuse.

Mr. Polishook added that the Division of Cemeteries' annual report mailing will be coming out in early 2024. He emphasized the importance of filing the previous years' annual report prior to beginning the upcoming year's report.

Mr. Polishook reviewed the quarterly abandonment report. Beyond our usual report on successful interventions and cemeteries at risk of abandonment, the Division has identified several instances that require further investigation to determine whether they can be considered abandonments for the purpose of funding.

23-09-D-54 – Vandalism, Abandonment and Monument Repair or Removal Fund Report

Ms. Young referred to the vandalism report posted online. She announced the update to the columbarium approval process, allowing delegated approval. The Division has approved four so far. The Division has approved 20 sets of updates to rules & regulations and 234 service fee changes this calendar year.

There are four new applications for funds from the vandalism fund to be reviewed at this meeting.

19-017 Maplewood Cemetery (Genesee), \$28,183.69

This cemetery seeks funds to repair 24 dangerous monuments. After discussion, a motion was made, seconded, and unanimously adopted approving the application by this cemetery for funds to repair these dangerous monuments for a total cost of \$28,183.69, subject to availability of funds.

The discussion of this application can be found in the video recording of this meeting at 15:00-17:40.

25-009 Glendale Cemetery (Lewis), \$29,112.30

This cemetery seeks funds to repair 31 dangerous monuments. After discussion, a motion was made,

seconded, and unanimously adopted approving the application by this cemetery for funds to repair these dangerous monuments for a total cost of \$29,112.30, subject to availability of funds.

The discussion of this application can be found in the video recording of this meeting at 17:41-20:07.

33-020 Floyd Cemetery (Oneida), \$68,181.30

This cemetery seeks funds to repair 48 dangerous monuments. After discussion, a motion was made, seconded, and unanimously adopted approving the application by this cemetery for funds to repair these dangerous monuments for a total cost of \$68,181.30, subject to availability of funds.

The discussion of this application can be found in the video recording of this meeting at 20:08-22:31.

59-013 Glenside Cemetery (Wayne), \$62,439.70

This cemetery seeks funds to repair 37 dangerous monuments. After discussion, a motion was made, seconded, and unanimously adopted approving the application by this cemetery for funds to repair these dangerous monuments for a total cost of \$62,439.70, subject to availability of funds.

The discussion of this application can be found in the video recording of this meeting at 22:32-24:54.

Public Comment

Robert Williams, Tom Chris and Linda Jones explained they are associated with a church and raised an inquiry regarding a potential development at Pinelawn Cemetery as it might affect the church's lots. Lewis Polishook explained the process for potential developments or renovations and elaborated that the Board did not currently have any such application under review and that it was his understanding that Pinelawn had not yet submitted an application to local authorities, which will take the lead on reviewing any such application. The commentators expressed a desire for more notice of development. The Board took note of their concerns and recommended the group reach out to Pinelawn for further discussions.

David Fleming expressed his approval for and appreciation of the Division's ongoing Cemetery 101 education classes.

The next Cemetery Board meeting is scheduled for November 14, 2023, at 10:30 a.m.

The meeting adjourned at 11:03 p.m.