

DIVISION OF CEMETERIES

STATE OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
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KATHY HOCHUL
GOVERNOR

CEMETERY BOARD

WALTER T. MOSLEY
SECRETARY OF STATE
CHAIR

LETITIA JAMES
ATTORNEY GENERAL

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

Cemetery Board Minutes October 15, 2024

Department of State
One Commerce Plaza, 99 Washington Avenue, 11th Floor, Room 1112
Albany, New York 12231

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

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mark Pattison, Department of State, Chair Jill Faber, Office of the New York State Attorney General

OTHER ATTENDEES:

Michael Catena, Division of Cemeteries	Cindi Craig, Division of Cemeteries
Charles Crane, Division of Cemeteries	Sarah Levin, Division of Cemeteries
Nathan McCarthy, Division of Cemeteries	Michael Morris, Department of State
Lewis Polishook, Division of Cemeteries	Natesha Salmon, Division of Cemeteries
Steven Troutman, Division of Cemeteries	Robert Vanderbles, Department of State
Alicia Young, Division of Cemeteries	

GUESTS:

Anthony Biolsi, New Montefiore Cem.	David Fleming Jr., Featherstonhaugh, Clyne & McCardle, LLP, & NYSAC
Mark Foggin	Adam Ginsberg, Cedar Grove Cem.
Brian Groblewski, Pinelawn Cem.	Jennifer Kovach, Forest Lawn Cem.
Justin Locke, Pinelawn Cem.	Jamie Lotz, Forest Lawn Cem.
Richard Moylan, Green-Wood Cem.	Julie R. Snyder, Forest Lawn Cem.
Tom Sprague	Mark Stempa

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

Opening Remarks

Chairman Mark Pattison called the meeting to order at 11:30 a.m. Mr. Pattison introduced himself and had Jill Faber introduce herself. Thomas Fuller was unable to attend this meeting.

24-10-A-57 – Minutes of Previous Meetings

A motion was made, seconded, and unanimously adopted approving the minutes of the September 10 meeting.



Department
of State

24-10-B-58 – Legislation and Regulation

1. Pending Legislation

Robert Vanderbles stated that there is no legislative report this month as the legislature is out of session.

2. Regulations

Robert Vanderbles indicated that there are no regulation updates this month.

24-10-C-59 – Division Report

Director Lewis Polishook reported on staffing. Our Syracuse investigator role has been filled. Our other two open roles for investigator/accountant roles are in the process of having our recommendations approved. We have a candidate selected for the Assistant Director position, subject to further HR processes.

Director Polishook and several Division representatives were able to attend the National Deathcare Industry Conference in California this past week.

Robert Vanderbles summarized an ongoing SEQRA review for construction at Pinelawn Cemetery, which may require an additional special session of the Cemetery Board later this month.

24-10-D-60 – Vandalism, Abandonment and Monument Repair or Removal Fund Report

Assistant Director Alicia Young reported that there are no significant updates to our annual report processing this year.

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

51-016 Fairview Cemetery (Steuben), \$15,357.75

This cemetery seeks funds to repair 10 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 \$15,357.75, subject to availability of funds.

The discussion of this application can be found in the video recording of this meeting at 9:19-11:50.

51-023 Grove Cemetery (Steuben), \$46,844.00

This cemetery seeks funds to repair 34 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 \$46,844.00, subject to availability of funds.

The discussion of this application can be found in the video recording of this meeting at 11:51-13:46.

51-040 Pleasant Valley (Steuben), \$22,888.25

This cemetery seeks funds to repair 23 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 \$22,888.25, subject to availability of funds.

The discussion of this application can be found in the video recording of this meeting at 13:47-16:01.

51-054 Addison Hill Cemetery (Steuben), \$57,725.00

This cemetery seeks funds to repair 42 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 \$57,725.00, subject to availability of funds.

The discussion of this application can be found in the video recording of this meeting at 16:02-18:20.

24-10-E-61 – 15-027 Forest Lawn (St. Matthews) – Columbarium

The cemetery seeks to erect a new columbarium. Forest Lawn has received several concerns from the community regarding the aesthetics of this project. We are addressing this application publicly before the board to allow for public comment.

David Fleming provided context for the reason behind the location chosen for the columbarium.

After discussion, a motion was made, seconded, and unanimously adopted approving construction of the new columbarium.

The discussion of this application can be found in the video recording of this meeting at 18:30-25:53.

24-10-F-62 – 32-015 North Ridge Cemetery – Major Alteration

The cemetery seeks to demolish a condemned church on their property and construct an office building on the newly cleared lot. This construction is not expected to impact any gravesites. The cemetery was issued a non-compliance notice because they performed demolition on the church prior to receipt of Board approval.

Director Polishook noted additional penalties may be levied against the cemetery regarding their non-compliance but still recommended approval of the project.

After discussion, a motion was made, seconded, and unanimously adopted approving

1. Demolition of the condemned church nunc-pro-tunc; and
2. Construction of an office building.

The discussion of this application can be found in the video recording of this meeting at 25:54-36:10.

24-10-G-63 – Town of Wallkill Planning Board – Lead Agency Designation re: New Cemetery

The Planning Board of the Town of Wallkill seeks consent to be lead agency under SEQRA concerning an application to create a new religious cemetery within the Town.

After discussion, a motion was made, seconded, and unanimously adopted, consenting to the Planning Board's status as lead agency.

The discussion of this notice can be found in the video recording of this meeting at 36:11-43:06.

Exempt Session

Robert Vanderbles recommended the Board move to exempt session to receive the advice of counsel on two issues. First, being an issue of non-compliance, and second, being an issue of potential litigation regarding a cemetery.

The meeting moved to an Exempt Session at 12:16 p.m.

The meeting returned from Exempt Session at 12:45 p.m.

A motion was made, seconded, and unanimously approved, recommending that Mount Carmel respond to the notice sent to them.

Public Comment

There was no comment from the public.

The next Cemetery Board meeting is scheduled for November 4, 2024, at 12:00 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 12:49 p.m.