

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 December 11, 2025

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
Stephanie Shulman, Department of Health

Jill Faber, Office of the New York Attorney General

OTHER ATTENDEES:

MD Zakir Ahmed, Division of Cemeteries
Michael Catena, Division of Cemeteries
Charles Crane, Division of Cemeteries
Lisa Dooley, Division of Cemeteries
Stephanie Gilman, Department of Health
Sarah Levin, Division of Cemeteries
Kerry McGovern, Division of Cemeteries
Jessica Rosario, Division of Cemeteries
Amanda Schreib, Department of State
Steven Troutman, Division of Cemeteries
Alicia Young, Division of Cemeteries

Cavon Butler, Division of Cemeteries
Cindi Craig, Division of Cemeteries
Jillian Diaz Cringle, Department of State
Rachel Eisenberg, Department of State
Jeff Hardwick, Division of Cemeteries
Nathan McCarthy, Division of Cemeteries
Lewis Polishook, Division of Cemeteries
Natesha Salmon, Division of Cemeteries
Michael Seelman, Division of Cemeteries
Robert Vanderbles, Department of State

GUESTS:

Adam Ginsberg, Mount Ararat Cmty.
Anthony Biolsi, Montefiore Cems.
Brian Groblewski, Pinelawn Cmty.
David F. Fleming, FCM, NYSAC
Jeffrey Malone, FCM
Julie Snyder, Forest Lawn Cmty.
Meera Joshi, Green-Wood Cmty.
Nate Romagnola, White Haven Mem. Park
Philip Tassi, Ferncliff Cmty.
Stacy Aguirre

Amy Driscoll
Arthur Rodriguez, Green-Wood Cmty.
Chris Converse, Forest Lawn Cmty.
James Galante, Nassau-Knolls Cmty.
John Smith
Justin Locke, Pinelawn Cmty.
Michael Austin, Elmlawn Cmty.
Nicholas DiBartolo, Mount Hope Cmty.
Sarah Parker



Department
of State

Opening Remarks

Chairman Mark Pattison called the meeting to order at 10:34 a.m. Mr. Pattison introduced himself and the other Board members.

Mr. Pattison extended his appreciation to all cemetery and division staff and cemetery volunteers.

Stephanie Shulman, representing the Department of Health, introduced Stephanie Gilman, who will be taking her place as the Department of Health representative to the Board in 2026.

25-12-A-93 – Minutes of Previous Meetings

A motion was made, seconded, and unanimously adopted approving the minutes of the November 13, 2025, meeting as submitted to the Board.

25-12-B-94 – Legislation and Regulation

1. Staffing Update

Board counsel Robert Vanderbles introduced Jillian Diaz Cringle, Deputy Counsel, and Rachel Eisenberg, Assistant Counsel, who will be working with the Division of Cemeteries in the future.

2. Pending Legislation

Mr. Vanderbles relayed there was no Legislative Report this month.

Regulations

Mr. Vanderbles reported on draft rule revisions currently in the works. We are drafting a notice of proposed rule making and supporting materials for the Board's consideration.

25-12-C-95 – Division Report

Division Director Lewis Polishook updated the Board on recruitment within the Division. Michael Seelman has accepted an Investigator 3 position within the Division. Investigator Kerry McGovern is moving to Albany and will serve as the Division's Investigator in the Albany Office, moving from the New York City office. Lisa Dooley has accepted the position of Associate Accountant. We are recruiting for three Senior Accountant positions. We ultimately seek to have three audit teams, each under an Auditor 2, and two investigative teams, each under an Investigator 2. We are re-classifying all Accountant positions within the Division to Auditor positions of equivalent grades and are canvassing for an Auditor 3 to head the Division's audit program.

Director Polishook highlighted community outreach programs. We held our first public-facing "Everything You're Dying to Know About Cemeteries" presentation this month at Green-Wood Cemetery in Brooklyn, which was well attended and received. We will be giving this presentation across the State throughout 2026, including a presentation at Hudson Valley Community College.

Assistant Director Alicia Young reported on the number of annual reports received to date and the percentage submitted electronically.

25-12-D-96 – Vandalism, Abandonment and Monument Repair or Removal Fund Report

Assistant Director Alicia Young referred the Board to the circulated Vandalism Report.

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

Elmwood Cemetery, No. 23-010 (Jefferson), \$27,181.01

This cemetery seeks funds to repair 22 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 \$27,181.01, subject to availability of funds.

The discussion of this application can be found in the video recording of this meeting at 19:47-22:49.

Springfield Cemetery, No. 39-038 (Otsego), \$55,568.82

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 this vandalized monument for a total cost of \$55,568.82, subject to availability of funds.

The discussion of this application can be found in the video recording of this meeting at 22:50-25:04.

Bayside Cemetery, No. 45-001 (St. Lawrence), \$69,506.42

This cemetery seeks funds to repair 68 dangerous monuments. After discussion, a motion was made, seconded, and unanimously adopted approving the application by this cemetery for funds to repair these vandalized monuments for a total cost of \$69,506.42, subject to availability of funds.

The discussion of this application can be found in the video recording of this meeting at 25:05-27:30.

Pleasant Valley Cemetery, No. 51-040 (Steuben), \$30,883.50

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 vandalized monuments for a total cost of \$30,883.50, subject to availability of funds.

The discussion of this application can be found in the video recording of this meeting at 27:31-31:24.

25-12-E-97 – Locust Valley Cemetery, No. 30-005: Major Alteration

Locust Valley Cemetery Association seeks to demolish two houses in two parcels of land the cemetery owns and to develop the land as additional burial space.

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

1. Finding that this major alteration is an unlisted action under SEQRA;
2. Finding that the major alteration will have no or minimal environmental impact;
3. Issuing a negative declaration; and
4. Authorizing Board Chairman Mark Pattison to sign the draft Short EAF Part 3 accompanying the Division's memorandum to the Board.

After the Board adopted this motion, another motion was made, seconded, and unanimously adopted approving the application for a major alteration, in an amount not to exceed \$929,748.75, subject to the receipt of all required local approvals.

The discussion of this application can be found in the video recording of this meeting at 31:39-38:09.

25-12-F-98 – Pinelawn Memorial Park and Arboretum, No. 52-044: Major Alteration

Pinelawn Memorial Park and Arboretum seeks to construct a new garden wall and associated gate for security.

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

1. Finding that this major alteration is an unlisted action under SEQRA;
2. Finding that the major alteration will have no or minimal environmental impact;
3. Issuing a negative declaration; and
4. Authorizing Board Chairman Mark Pattison to sign the draft Short EAF Part 3 accompanying the Division's memorandum to the Board.

After the Board adopted this motion, another motion was made, seconded, and unanimously adopted approving the application for a major alteration, in an amount not to exceed \$326,445.00, subject to receipt of all required local approvals.

The discussion of this can be found in the video recording of this meeting at 38:10-42:06.

25-12-G-99 – Ferncliff Cemetery, No. 60-006: Mausoleum

Ferncliff Cemetery seeks to renovate an existing mausoleum by turning an area including and adjacent to a break and work room into additional crypt and niche space.

After discussion, a motion was made, seconded, and unanimously adopted approving the application for mausoleum construction, in an amount not to exceed \$1,251,969.00, subject to receipt of all required local approvals.

The discussion of this can be found in the video recording of this meeting at 42:07-46:25.

Public Comment

David Fleming thanked the Division and the Board for their cooperation and educational efforts throughout 2025.

The next regular Cemetery Board meeting is scheduled for January 13, 2026, at 10:30 a.m.

The meeting adjourned at 11:22 a.m.