

DIVISION OF CEMETERIES

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
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KATHY HOCHUL
GOVERNOR

CEMETERY BOARD

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SECRETARY OF STATE
CHAIR

LETITIA JAMES
ATTORNEY GENERAL

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

Cemetery Board Minutes March 10, 2026

Department of State
One Commerce Plaza, 99 Washington Avenue
Eleventh Floor, Executive Conference Room
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 Gilman, Department of Health

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Jill F. Faber, Office of the New York State Attorney General

OTHER ATTENDEES:

Zakir Ahmed, Division of Cemeteries

Jillian Cringle, Department of State

Nathan McCarthy, Division of Cemeteries

Michael Morris, Department of State

Lewis Polishook, Division of Cemeteries

Michael Seelman, Division of Cemeteries

Robert Vanderbles, Department of State

Michael Catena, Division of Cemeteries

Rachel Eisenberg, Department of State

Kerry McGovern, Division of Cemeteries

Sarah Levin, Division of Cemeteries

Natesha Salmon, Division of Cemeteries

Steven Troutman, Division of Cemeteries

Alicia Young, Division of Cemeteries

GUESTS:

Adam Ginsberg, Mount Ararat Cmty.

Arthur Rodriguez, Green-Wood Cmty.

David F. Fleming, FCM, NYSAC

Justin Locke, Pinelawn Cmty.

Philip Tassi, Ferncliff Cmty.

Anthony Biolsi, Montefiore Cmty.

Brian Groblewski, Pinelawn Mem. Pk.

Jamie Lotz, Forest Lawn Group

Julie Snyder, Forest Lawn Group

Opening Remarks

Chairman Mark Pattison called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. Mr. Pattison introduced himself and Stephanie Gilman. Jill Faber was absent because of a scheduling conflict.

26-03-A-13 – Minutes of Previous Meetings

A motion was made, seconded, and unanimously adopted approving the minutes of the February 12, 2026, meeting as submitted to the Board.

26-03-B-14 – Legislation and Regulation



Department
of State

1. Pending Legislation

Division Counsel Robert Vanderbles referred the Board to the published Legislative Report.

2. Regulations

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

26-03-C-15 – Division Report

Division Director Lewis Polishook updated the Board on recruitment within the Division. We currently have an auditor and one investigator position that we are canvassing for and another auditor and investigator that await a canvass.

Director Polishook highlighted community outreach programs. We are holding Cemetery 101 courses across the State. There are many scheduled dates and locations across the next several months; the next one is March 18, 2026, at Mount Pleasant Cemetery in Eastern Long Island. We are distributing materials for and organizing this year's Caring for Your Cemetery Day, which will be on Saturday, April 25, and Sunday, April 26.

Assistant Director Alicia Young reported on annual report statistics. We have received 433 annual reports for the current fiscal year and received 415 annual reports since January 1 (not all of which are for the most recent fiscal year). 61% of reports for the current reporting year were received online.

26-03-D-16 – Vandalism, Abandonment and Monument Repair or Removal Fund Report

Assistant Director Young reviewed the circulated Vandalism Report. We anticipate spending our entire \$2 million appropriation for the fiscal year ending March 31.

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

Breesport Hilltop Cemetery, No. 08-003 (Chemung), \$94,233.58

This cemetery seeks funds to repair 89 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 \$94,233.58, subject to availability of funds.

The discussion of this application can be found in the video recording of this meeting at 5:58-8:29.

Forest Lawn (Forest Lawn) Cemetery Group, No. 15-027 (Erie), \$91,720.74

This cemetery seeks funds to repair 79 dangerous monuments. After discussion, a motion was made, seconded, and unanimously adopted approving the application by this cemetery for funds to repair this dangerous monument for a total cost of \$91,720.74, subject to availability of funds.

The discussion of this application can be found in the video recording of this meeting at 8:30-13:08.

Forest Lawn (Lakeside) Cemetery Group, No. 15-027 (Erie), \$41,770.30

This cemetery seeks funds to repair 40 dangerous monuments. After discussion, a motion was made, seconded, and unanimously adopted approving the application by this cemetery for funds to repair this

dangerous monument for a total cost of \$41,770.30, subject to availability of funds.

The discussion of this application can be found in the video recording of this meeting at 13:09-16:40.

Exeter Cemetery, No. 39-010 (Otsego), \$28,579.34

This cemetery seeks funds to repair 26 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 \$28,579.34, subject to availability of funds.

The discussion of this application can be found in the video recording of this meeting at 16:41-19:02.

Pleasant Valley Cemetery, No. 45-053 (St. Lawrence), \$65,610.46

This cemetery seeks funds to repair 59 dangerous monuments. After discussion, a motion was made, seconded, and unanimously adopted approving the application by this cemetery for funds to repair this dangerous monument for a total cost of \$65,610.46, subject to availability of funds.

The discussion of this application can be found in the video recording of this meeting at 19:03-21:41.

26-03-E-19 – Cedar Hill Cemetery, No. 36-005: Columbarium

The cemetery seeks to construct a columbarium area with associated paths.

After discussion, a motion was made, seconded, and unanimously adopted approving construction of this columbarium at a cost not to exceed \$686,399.00, subject to receipt of all other required local approvals.

The discussion of this application can be found in the video recording of this meeting at 21:42-27:24.

Public Comment

Julie Snyder, Representing Forest Lawn Group, thanked the Board for their approval of Forest Lawn's applications brought before it today.

David Fleming, Representing the New York State Association of Cemeteries, thanked the Board for their continued cooperation, particularly regarding the Division's plans to attend this week's NYSAC regionals and this Spring's NYSAC conference.

The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for April 14, 2026, at 10:30 a.m.

The meeting adjourned at 11:01 a.m.