

**2024 MINUTES  
REGULAR CALLED MEETING  
HIGHLAND CEMETERY BOARD  
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 7, 2024, 2:00 PM  
OWENS MULTIPURPOSE CENTER  
1405 SW 11<sup>th</sup> STREET, LAWTON, OK, 73501  
CONFERENCE ROOM**

The Meeting of the Highland Cemetery Board was held Wednesday, August 7, 2024, at the Owens Multipurpose Center, 1405 SW 11<sup>th</sup> Street, Lawton, Oklahoma, and called to order by Deputy Director, Mitchell Dooley, at 2:08 p.m.

**ROLL CALL:**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Robert Williams, Gerald “Deuce” Gragg

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Barry Beauchamp

**STAFF PRESENT:** Donald Kousman, Sexton; Mitchell Dooley, Deputy Director; Dylan Dunavin, Admin. II recording secretary

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Kim McConnell

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**II. REPORTS**

Donald reported he has not heard anything from Misty Tilghman, so that will continue to remain removed from the agenda until contact is initiated from Misty Tilghman

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**III. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

None

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**IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None

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**V. NEW BUSINESS**

- A.** Consider approving the minutes of the April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024, Special meeting.

MOTION by Robert Williams; SECOND by Gerald “Deuce” Gragg

AYES: Robert Williams, Gerald “Deuce” Gragg,

NAYS: None

- B.** Receive report from semi-annual audit of Highland Cemetery perpetual care fund. Balance of account as of June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024, is \$90,173.27. Copy of account statement provided by CPA Stephen Newcombe attached to agenda packet.

NO MOTION NEEDED

- C.** Receive a report on Highland Cemetery Renovation Projects

Donald Kousman reports that the top priority of renovations is the chapel/gazebo because the concrete is falling apart. Also, the office building floods and has accumulated mold which why these two buildings are the top two priorities.

DK – Additionally, six or seven residents share the east fence with the cemetery, and that entire fence needs to be completely replaced. We will also be looking at putting up a privacy slats instead of the netting for longevity reasons. We will also need to get updated quotes on this due to the time that has passed since the original quotes were made, but I will reach out to the same vendors that gave the original quotes.

Deuce Gragg asked if there would be gates on the new fence to prevent the current situation of people cutting the current fence to get through.

DK suggested leaving a couple of gaps instead of gates would be best. Would prevent ongoing maintenance for the gate plus would eliminate the need for people to cut into the gate much like is already being done.

Robert Williams asked if people were cutting the fence to come vandalize the cemetery.

DK – No, vandalism hasn't been a recurring issue even when the fence is cut.

RW – Are we still looking at cameras?

DK – Yes, that is absolutely something we are working on, just waiting on the funds, deciding on locations and checking on access to internet so they will operate.

DK – The signs on Blocks 32 and 33 are in very bad shape and need replaced. I spoke with Cliff from Public Works about possibly assisting in that.

Mitchell Dooley expressed that he was under the impression that Public Works was no longer doing signs for other departments.

DK – I was unaware of that, but I will talk to Cliff to confirm and see where we stand. We may be able to do the work in house, because then we can make sure the sign placement won't be in our way going forward.

DK – The fifth item on the renovation list is general concrete work around the cemetery, but primarily on the chapel and gazebo which would ultimately fall under the top priority. I would like to pour a curve near the gazebo to prevent people from driving up onto that area plus it would allow the irrigation to work properly.

DK also reports that a sidewalk in block 57 is needed. Would like to start with a 60-70ft stretch because it would allow the upright monuments could sit on the concrete rather than the ground allowing it to stay level over time. The overall needed sidewalk would be roughly 220ft, so it would be a gradual and progressive project rather than all at once.

DG asked if this would mean a size restriction on upright monuments would be put in place.

DK – Yes, and we can size down monuments that wouldn't meet that threshold.

DK - Expressed that a plan is needed for burials on the back side of the cemetery because of the easement due to utility vehicles coming in and out constantly. The drainage in that area has already caused issues, so that would need to be the first big piece to investigate for the full solution.

DK reports that all three flag poles need to be replaced. The two in the front constantly break, so it would be wise to look at flag poles that features internal hardware rather than everything being left out in the weather for long term use.

DK reports the communication device for the bell tower will play sound in the office, but the sound will not play through the bell tower itself. We will investigate whether it is a simple communication issue, or if it could be a wiring issue which runs all the way from the office to the tower.

#### **D. Receive Report on internal projects.**

Donald Kousman reports that we are heavily into the GIS site where all the burials and work orders are entered. GIS has taken a photo of every gravestone, temporary marker, and monument which has been uploaded along with a GPS location on all the burial locations. You can view everyone buried in the cemetery, and the goal is to add the block location and space number, but it would be very time consuming. There is also a search engine to search up the deceased by name rather than hunting for their space on the map, along with a QR code on the side of the main office that links them to this same GIS site if they are in the cemetery.

DG – How does this get updated?

DK – We have to manually add it ourselves. Once I get a tablet it will save a lot of time because I can add all the needed information at one time in the field.

RW – Can you print the information from GIS or is it website only?

DK – Yes you can print the info, and that is actually very helpful because I give the family a copy also when I show them the burial location to confirm it is acceptable for the family.

DK – I also save the obituaries to the GIS so everything can be found in one screen.

RW asked where families go to obtain a deed for burial at Highland Cemetery

DK responded that deeds are obtained at the City Clerk's office, and that would be another useful aspect to GIS is if the City Clerk's office could possibly be involved so the entire process is all in GIS. DK explained that he doesn't actually know how the deeds are filed through the clerk's office, so he isn't sure how or if that could truly work.

DK – We have thousands of the little burial cards in the office. Our plan is to use interns to scan all of them and get it digitized. Same plan for the large binders of information.

**E.** Receive report on CIP projects.

DK reports that the CIP projects are the renovation list. He expressed that he waiting on an updated CIP report to know exactly what the allotted money will be for the cemetery to make a true gameplan and obtain quotes.

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**VI. ADJOURN**

MOTION by Gerald "Deuce" Gragg; SECOND by Robert Williams

AYES: Robert Williams, Gerald "Deuce" Gragg,

NAYS: None

MOTION CARRIES

**Meeting adjourned @ 2:40 p.m.**