

BOARD OF CEMETERY COMMISSIONERS

The Board of Cemetery Commissioners herewith files our annual report of activities for the calendar year 2006, our 146th year of operation. We are a three member entirely volunteer board, consisting of Chairman Ellen O'Brien Cushman, Vice-Chairman Charles R. Johnson and Clerk Alexander E. Corbett, III. We are grateful to have Robert Gardiner, Superintendent of Belmont Cemetery, work completely in partnership with the Board.

Highland Meadow Cemetery Activities

2006 was another momentous and historic year. On March 13, 2006 residents and taxpayers of Belmont could purchase lots at the new Highland Meadow Cemetery. Anxious and excited customers awaited the opening, lining up close to dawn. There was an electric atmosphere as long-time cemetery supporters enjoyed coffee and conversation. The overwhelming feeling of relief swept the crowd as the first lots were sold. By December 31, 2006, the lot sale revenue topped \$1,348,000! The breakdown of purchases follows: 49 cremation lots, 263 casket lots. Sales have slowed while construction continues but we expect another surge in sales once we open in the spring of 2007.

Belmont Cemetery Activities

Although new burial lots for traditional interments have not been available at Belmont Cemetery since 1988, 97 interments were made to existing plots in 2006 including 28 cremations. (This compares to 102 total in 2005, including 30 cremations). Of the 97 total, 60 (62%) of the interments were non-residents of the Town, to whom extra fees were assessed totaling \$18,000. Total fee receipts for the calendar year 2006 were \$92,310 down from \$103,820 in calendar 2005.

Staff and Organization

Belmont Cemetery continues to be a truly beautiful and pastoral place. We know that the expertise and dedication of our employees, Superintendent Robert Gardiner, Foreman John McDonough, Staff Jeff Currier, Dan Tempesta and Craig Crisafi and Administrative Assistant Nancy Fay will create the same feeling for the new Highland Meadow Cemetery. We are deeply grateful for their attitude of compassion for grieving families as well as for their expertise.

Progress against Goals:

We are pleased to report the following progress against our goals for Fiscal Year 2007:

- **Acquire and develop land for a new cemetery.** Land deeded to Town June 2005. Opening planned for May 2007.
- **Develop pricing structure and marketing brochure for Highland Meadow.** Pricing plan implemented, first phase of market plan a resounding success. Second phase of marketing plan underway in anticipation of opening in May.
- **Working with Town Treasurer, implement a financial plan.** Working cooperatively with Treasurer Floyd Carman, we have developed this plan, with these goals in mind: 1. Pay off debt 2. Fund perpetual care 3. Invest in future cemetery phases 4. Develop a plan to become cost-neutral for all cemetery operations within six years. Continuing to develop the longer-term aspect of the plan.
- **Continue to promote and improve the Annual Planting Program for individual lots that was established in 1997.** Program continues to thrive and enroll new participants, totaling some \$77,000 now.
- **Continue tree planting program originally established in 1996 and enhance landscape areas to beautify Belmont Cemetery.** Exploring cooperative funding opportunities with community organizations and community service hours for Belmont students. In response to neighbor concerns, our staff researched and implemented a program to save the Hemlock hedges along our borders (hundreds of mature trees) suffering from the threat of insect infestation.
- **Develop new ways to inspire and reward long-term employees and encourage newer employees to remain.** No staff turnover again this year. Opening of Highland Meadow will represent significant challenges to staff over the next year and we will continue to include them in operational decision-making.
- **Develop new revenue opportunities and identify cost-savings opportunities.** To date, we have not seen any operating cost savings attributable to the consolidation into a DPW. As we prepare to open a second location, we will be emphasizing efficiency of operations and employ strict cost controls on both labor and equipment and initiate new revenue programs. We will review our pricing structure as we near opening to be certain we recover all service-dedicated costs.

Calendar Year 2006 Operational Statistics:

Cemetery Perpetual Care Fund.....	\$ 491,077
Interest Income from Perpetual Care Fund.....	\$ 16,544

Annual Planting Fund (includes H. Smith Fund)	\$ 77,464
Total Fee Receipts.....	\$ 92,310
Total Expense Budget Appropriation for FY2006	\$ 372,005
Actual Expended against FY2006 Appropriated Budget.....	\$ 337,334
Full Time Employees of Cemetery Division	5
Part Time Employees of Cemetery Division.....	1

Respectfully Submitted,
Ellen O'Brien Cushman, Chairman