

FEBRUARY 12, 2003 - MEETING MINUTES

The special meeting was called to order at 8:10 A.M. Present were Commissioners Ellen O'Brien Cushman, Alexander E. Corbett, III, Charles R. Johnson, Superintendent Robert P. Gardiner, and Administrative Assistant Nancy T. Fay. Carolyn Bishop also attended as the League of Women Voters Observer.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss two issues: (1) the proposed move of the Board of Cemetery Commissioners from an elected board to an appointed board and (2) the formation of a DPW including the cemetery.

Elected vs. Appointed Cemetery Board Concerns/Questions

No salary is involved in this change, so there is no cost savings.

Can one elected board (Selectmen) actually eliminate other elected boards? The town residents elected commissioners; shouldn't the town residents decide this?

Main reason for remaining elected would be to advocate for the next phase of the cemetery. The second reason to remain elected is to set the rates and open the new cemetery.

The present (and prior) commissioners have worked very hard to get the 13.9 acres for the cemetery, and the commitment to advocate for Phase 2 development needs to be continued.

Under Chapter 114, the cemetery receipts for both the existing and new cemetery should be for cemetery purposes only. In Milton, the Cemetery Commissioners buy equipment from receipts. No funds are commingled, and all funds are under the discretion of the Commissioners.

The appointment of Commissioners could become political and not necessarily reflect what the town residents want.

The Commissioners agreed it would be best to remain as an elected board.

DPW Concerns/Questions

The timing of this proposed change is not appropriate as the Commissioners feel that the cemetery employees will be needed especially during the first year of operation solely for cemetery purposes.

Commissioners participated in the Resolution to investigate this change and had specific questions and concerns that have not been addressed yet.

The cost and service increases were not addressed by the report prepared by Monarch Services as presented by the Town Administrator.

The presentation by the Town Administrator lists Cemetery employees as six, but there are only four including the Superintendent.

It was felt that in scheduling staff, the cemetery would lose personnel more than gain help. The strong feeling of responsibility to our customers and the level of service they expect is another concern.

If the position of Superintendent is eliminated at some point in time, there will be no one to oversee the daily operation and commitment to perpetual care paid for by owners. The reality that upkeep will deteriorate to some extent is a major concern.

Commissioner Johnson stated that the presentation did not answer his questions and concerns. Commissioner Corbett stated that he felt DPW reorganization could be good for the town, but has reservations about the role of the cemetery. Chairman Cushman stated she would not be able to endorse this change until more information requested in the Resolution and her follow up memorandum were addressed.

It was agreed that Chairman Cushman would draft a letter expressing these concerns and circulate it for the Commissioner's comments prior to sending to the Town Administrator and Selectmen before their scheduled meeting on February 24th.

Respectfully submitted,

Alexander E. Corbett, III, Clerk