

**Johnson County Cemetery District Minutes  
December 14th, 2021**

The regular monthly meeting of the Johnson County Cemetery District was held at The Willow Grove Cemetery in Buffalo, Wyoming on December 14th, 2021. The meeting was called to order by President John Zorbas at 2:00 p.m. Present were: John Hanson, Carolyn Fox, Craig Wetterlund, Nancy Elm, John Ehlers (Zoom), John Zorbas, Chanda Rule, Megan Boggs, Van Frazier, Mark Bentley, Dave and Kate Harness, Mary's iPhone (via Zoom) Linda Greenough (via Zoom), Seth Taylor from the Buffalo Bulletin (via Zoom), Kay (via Zoom) and Dennette Mondeau (via Zoom). **Note:** Agenda format was changed for this meeting with "public comments" being moved to the top of the agenda. John Zorbas and Nancy Elm added amendments #3 and #19 to new business. Rolling Calendar, CPA Review (This has been completed), RFP's Review and employee performance reviews which will start at the end of the month.

**I. PUBLIC COMMENT:** Kate Harness reads a letter she wrote explaining why she is against the Saturday Burial Fee. Craig Wetterlund reads a letter opposing Saturday Burial Fee from a former cemetery board member Steve Gunsolley. Carolyn Fox shared a phone call she received from Penny Laird. In this phone conversation it was expressed to Carolyn that Penny feels we should operate like a business similar to stores down town which are open weekends because this is when people want to do business with them. Penny also expressed to Carolyn that if the cemetery staff does not want to work on Saturdays, the board needs to find staff that will. Dave Harness expressed that he is not pleased with the Saturday burial fee and that he has something coming in the near future in the newspaper to express this. Dave also added his concern about the locks installed on the gates in the fence line that is between the Cemetery and his property. Dave states "these gates are not cemetery property." Dave says that these gates were built by him and the gates and fence are maintained by him and that they are his gates. Dave also expressed that the ditch needs to be accessed by the users of this ditch for maintenance. Dave asked why these locks were put on his gates and only his gates as well as asking if this was a board decision. As the meeting progressed, Dave stated that he wanted answers to his questions. John Z explains that this was a "public comments" section of the meeting and not the debate portion. John Z explains that this could be put on the agenda under new business and more discussion could take place when the meeting gets to this section. Craig Wetterlund calls "point to order" and stated that he wants to hear an answer to Mr. Harness's questions as well! Mary iPhone then asks a question of why the Saturday burial fee was necessary. She also expressed that she thought the money does not go to employees and asked why. This whole issue was sad, she said. She also states that can't believe there was fee tacked on for a day when most families can get together for funerals and she does not understand. John Z asks if she had any other comments acknowledge that her comments were heard. John Z open the meeting to any other online comments and there were none. John Z then asks Craig if he wanted to add anything to the agenda pertaining to the lock gates issue. Craig Wetterlund again says "I want to hear an answer to Dave's question of why Dave's gate were the only gates chained and locked!" John Z told Craig that this will be added to New Business and the discussion will take place at this time.

**II. VOUCHER:** Carolyn Fox moves to accept vouchers and John H seconds. No discussion about vouchers There was a vote and motion carried.

**III. MINUTES:** Nancy Elm makes a motion to approve the minutes. John Hanson seconds the motion. No discussion. There is a vote motion carried.

**IV. GUEST SPEAKERS:**

**V. TREASURER'S REPORT:**

Chanda went over the financial report. She stated that the balance sheet does reflect a statement that was received on this day. Chanda informed of a \$66,000 property tax deposit. Chanda says we have not received a bill for the liability insurance as of yet and typically we do in December. Chanda also points out on the budget report that the district is at 42% expenditures for the fiscal year. There are a few line items that are over, some of these are one-time fees. She also states that we are at 34% overall for what was budgeted. Chanda stated that the checking account is carrying a balance of \$79,000 and earning 1/10 of percent interest. She wants to transfer \$60,000 to Wyostar if everyone agrees and this will earn 1% interest. Chanda also states that there should be another property tax deposit in December. Health insurance will not come out until January or



February. John Z asks if there needs be a motion to move that \$60,000 to Wyostar? John E states there is a standing motion for this from a few months ago. Craig W states that if there is a standing order it makes no sense to make a motion for this action. This is the consensus from the board and the money will be transferred. John Z asks if there is a motion to approve the financial report and submit to the board? John H make a motion and Craig seconds. No discussion. There is a vote, motion carried.

**VI. WILLOW GROVE SEXTON'S REPORT:** Van stated we had wind events that blew limbs out of trees and the staff have been picking them up. The staff has been Mulching leaves as well. Van also scheduled water line camera for lower pump house discharge line. The camera would only go 15 feet into the pipe due to the pipe climbing a hill. Staff is in the process of trying to think of something else to do to find the leak. JCCD has spent \$5825.00 on cremation Garden construction document process from the \$17,500.00 budgeted. Van also states that there are three mowers that are leaking badly and will need to go to the dealers for possible pump rebuilds/repairs. John Z gave direction to work with John E. for budget issues and schedule these mowers to go into the shop for repairs. It was also stated that the district just got a new mower last year and we have been getting new ones every three years.

**VII. KAYCEE SEXTON'S REPORT:** Van states there is a varmint infestation in the Kaycee cemetery that are digging holes in one of the burial lots. Dennette has bought grain to put out to bait these animals. She will put out poisoned oats in a couple of weeks to see if this takes care of the problem. Van will get weed and pest involved if needed. Nancy Elm asks Van how deep a grave need to be? The answer from staff was between 5 and 6 feet. Nancy then asks Van if they are not allowed to get down in the hole to level it up? Van states that cemetery staff have stop going into graves for this it is an OSHA violation und3er trenching standards. Nancy then asks if we just put the caskets in the hole lop sided? Van states that the staff digs the graves and levels the bottom the best you can be done with the backhoe. Nancy states that Dennis Elm has been doing for years and one of his guys always get down in the grave to dress it up. Van states that he cannot tell a contractor not to do this, just the staff at the cemetery. John Z. also explained that this a huge liability for cemetery staff to operate this way but if a contractor wants to do this, we cannot stop them. John Z. also says it is not encouraged to use this practice.

**VIII. CIMS REPORT:** We are at 100% complete of the scanning of old burial permits from the Harness Funeral Home and loading into CIMS. Starting on scanning the old burial permits issued by the City of Buffalo.

**IX. PRESENTATIONS:** John E. went over a written proposal from Mohatt, Johnson & Godwin for FY22 review of financial statements. This proposal would not exceed \$4800.00 for their services for the next fiscal year. John E. makes a motion to continue using Mohatt, Johnson & Godwin for this service. Carolyn Fox seconds. No discussion. There is a vote, motion carried.

**X. EXECUTIVE SESSION:** Executive session started at 2:45 PM and regular session convened at 3:45 PM.

**XI. OLD BUSINESS:**

1. Bids for the office renovations inside work were presented. The bids came from Lurylei LLC and came in at \$25,320, Clear Creek Builders LLC and came in at \$7,930.00 and Mand N Construction LLC which came in at \$4,320.00. Motion to accept the \$4320.00 bid for the inside work of the office by Craig W., seconded by John H. No discussion. Vote motion carried.
2. Cremation Garden update. There was a set of draft construction plans that was presented by Erick Irwin with CPRA. This set of plans is 80% complete. John Z. communicated the discussion that took place that included taking these draft plans to local landscaping companies and asking them if there are questions or if they would have enough information to bid this project. This help facilitate the process once these documents are finalized.
3. Strategic Plan workshop date. After discussion February 1<sup>st</sup> is the date that the workshop is scheduled starting at 12:00 PM.
4. Craig Wetterlund's response to the letter from Donna Jarvis. Craig made verbal contact with Donna and Donna stated that she does not want a response letter. Carolyn F. states that she thinks as a board there still needs to be a response. John Z. asks if Carolyn F. is she would want to do this and Carolyn F. says yes. John E. states that there needs to be documentation for the files that the board responded to her concerns either through a letter or Craig's W. verbal response. John Z. says it will be included in the meeting minutes. John E.



wants a copy of the email correspondence between John E. and Craig W. put into the minutes as well. Carolyn F. think it's important that a letter be drafted and she will draft a letter.

4. Saturday burial information form other cemeteries. This was gathered by Van F. from 17 different cemeteries around Wyoming, Montana and Colorado. John Z. states that this info shows the district's Saturday burial fee schedule is not out of line with other cemeteries. This is in the packet and can be shared with constituents.

5. Permanent staff compensation for Saturday funerals. Van F. would like to see an option of comp time or over time pay for regular employee that work on Saturdays for burials. John H. asks if we could just make it over time as opposed to comp time and asked about John E's research on this matter. John E. states that the cemetery gives up a months' worth of time for comp time for a full-time employee. John Z. stated that Tim and Megan were asked several years ago if they wanted comp time or overtime and they chose comp time. John E. also suggested and supported paying a flat fee for Saturday burials to regular employees. John Z. doesn't think that labor laws would allow this to happen. After being asked Van stated that Megan likes to have some comp time to use for appointments so she doesn't have to use 4 hours of vacation because vacation is required to be taken in four-hour increments. Van doesn't think it is a big deal and would like the overtime. John Z. gave direction to work out nuts and bolts of this topic with Chanda and John E. This will be brought back to the next board meeting.

## **XII. NEW BUSINESS:**

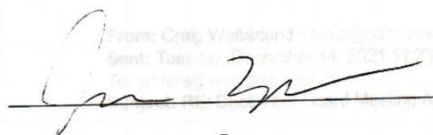
1. Amendment policy and procedures manual article 5 item 6. Van F. proposes implementing a burial workorder permit that would be distributed to funeral homes electronically. This document would organize information and the process for scheduling burials as well as the cemetery taking an active part of the process. This form would have to be filled out by the funeral homes and sent to us. We, cemetery staff, make sure everything (fees, deeds, burial permit, special instructions etc.) are in place or taken care of. The work order and burial request is then approved by cemetery staff and burials are scheduled. This would also help us determine if we could accommodate burial requests at any given time with manpower. Motion is made to amend article 5 by adding item 6a, JCCD Burial Work Order, by John H. and Carolyn F. seconds. No other discussion. Vote, motion carried.
2. Amendment 19 Burial options. This is collaborative effort between John Z. and Nancy E. to give more service and more options for the public as well as the option of having burial vaults or casket. John E. makes a motion to adopt amendment 19 but strike the word "and or caskets." John H. second this motion. Discussion included why there were requirements in place for vaults. There was a vote and motion carried. Motion to change article 6 to read vaults are not required in Johnson County Cemeteries was made by Craig W. Nancy E. second the motion. No discussion. There was a vote and motion carried.
3. Amendment 3. Nancy E. asked John Z. to draft this amendment which concerns a change in fee schedule for Saturday Burials. The change would read \$400.00 fee for Saturday casketed burials and a \$200.00 fee for cremains burials. John E. makes a motion to table this until the compensation fees are determined for Saturday burials so there is a better feel for if this and this is the appropriate number. John H. second this motion. No other discussion. There is a vote and motion carried.
4. Locks on gates. John Z. received a call from Barry Crago and Tucker Ruby (Attorneys in Buffalo) and it looks like the board will be receiving a proposal from the cemetery neighbors solidifying in writing an access right through the cemetery gates. John Z. states this will protect both land owners and the cemetery. Craig W. proposes that the neighboring landowners are not accessing the cemetery. There was discussion about the whole complex being considered the cemetery even if it's not developed. Craig W. states that he has a big problem with locks on gates on interior fencing. Craig W. asks if there are locks on gates all around the cemetery to include Klondike. Megan says there is locks on the gates on Klondike. John H. states that he doesn't like locks on gates from the view of a rancher. Its not good neighbor policy and if you lock gates you have to give the neighbor a key John H. proclaims. John Z. says that he instructed the gates to be locked and it wasn't done to deny access but more of a control point so the cemetery knows what is going on. This is also what the agreement will do John Z. stated. John Z instructed staff to remove the locks because this agreement coming down the pike. John Z. also states that there will be signed installed near these gates. John Z. will bring agreement to the next meeting. John E. ask if the cemetery district will incur any legal or engineering costs from this? John Z says no there will not be any cost associated with this. John E. states that somehow the county is footing the bill for all this. John Z. says he doesn't know but we are not paying anything. John E. asks "we know this for a fact" right? John Z. says

yes and that he does not have any authorization to engage in legal activities. John E. says "it strikes him as odd that we have 2 county attorneys, a cemetery district and 2 private parties involved" and he doesn't understand how we are getting free legal services and this is why he asking. John Z. says "as far as he knows there is not cost." He also says that if this comes up there will be a stop put on it until there is authorization. Craig W. says Barry is doing this through pro bono.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:37 P.M., following a motion by John Hanson, seconded by Nancy E.

The next meeting will be January 11th at 2:00 PM at the Willow Grove Cemetery Business Office.

Respectfully submitted by Van Frazier

 Board President

 Board Secretary

From: jellens@willowgrove2015.com  
Sent: Monday, December 13, 2021 5:55 PM  
To: Craig Westerlund <craig@willowgrove2015.com>; Carolyn Fox <carolynfox@willowgrove2015.com>; Chanda Rule <chandra@willowgrove2015.com>; John Zorbas <jz@willowgrove2015.com>; Nancy Elin <nancyelin@willowgrove2015.com>; Denette Mandan <denette@willowgrove2015.com>  
Subject: RE: December Board Meeting Agenda

Craig,  
in my mind, the goal of a response had more to do with justifying the fee, and almost everything to do with acknowledging and documenting to all parties that her concerns were shared and heard by the entire Board, not just you. I think she is owed that courtesy, and I believe it wise that our records are likewise documented. You previously agreed to draft the response. I don't understand the change of mind.

From: Craig Westerlund <craig@willowgrove2015.com>  
Sent: Monday, December 13, 2021 5:57 PM  
To: Willow Grove Cemetery <willowgrove2015@gmail.com>; Carolyn Fox <carolynfox@willowgrove2015.com>; Chanda

jehlers@wyoming.com <jehlers@wyoming.com>  
To: Van Frazier-JCCD <jccdssexton21@gmail.com>

Tue, Dec 14, 2021 at 12:54 PM

Van – please print this out and only have it available for distribution if Craig or I ask for it to be distributed.

Thanks

John Ehlers

From: Craig Wetterlund <craig@bannerlandco.com>  
Sent: Tuesday, December 14, 2021 11:23 AM  
To: jehlers@wyoming.com  
Subject: RE: December Board Meeting Agenda

Mr. Ehlers

Take a good look around. I am representing the citizens of this county. Not you.

I again spoke with Donna Jarvis and she said, don't send me a letter.

Mr. Wetterlund

From: jehlers@wyoming.com <jehlers@wyoming.com>  
Sent: Monday, December 13, 2021 8:55 PM  
To: Craig Wetterlund <craig@bannerlandco.com>; 'Willow Grove Cemetery' <willowgrovecemetery2015@gmail.com>; 'Carolyn Fox' <foxonrocks@msn.com>; 'Chanda Rule' <chanda@vcn.com>; 'John Zorbas' <jgzorbas@icloud.com>; 'Nancy Elm' <nancyelm@rtconnect.net>; 'Dennette Mondeau' <KayceeCemetery@gmail.com>  
Subject: RE: December Board Meeting Agenda

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In my mind, the goal of a response had some to do with justifying the fee, and almost everything to do with acknowledging and documenting to all parties that her concerns were shared and heard by the entire Board, not just you. I think she is owed that courtesy, and I believe it wise that our records are likewise documented. You previously agreed to draft the response. I don't understand the change of mind.

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Sent: Monday, December 13, 2021 5:57 PM  
To: Willow Grove Cemetery <willowgrovecemetery2015@gmail.com>; Carolyn Fox <foxonrocks@msn.com>; Chanda



<nancyelm@rtconnect.net>; **Dennette Mondeau** <KayceeCemetery@gmail.com>  
**Subject: Re: December Board Meeting Agenda**

I spoke with Mrs Jarvis and after the meeting and it's results, she didn't feel that a letter, from me, would do anything to justify the vote for the Saturday \$400 charge.

Craig Wetterlund

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They tried an extremely unloved and loyal Cemetery Section for reasons completely unknown.

It appears to not be a friendly working environment anymore. The board and staff used to work together as a team. All that seems gone now and it's almost like a dictatorship coming from the board. Willow Grove used to be a sacred place. Just driving through you could feel the serenity. I have spent times walking through the cemetery with Bill Adams, and shared stories of individuals when we passed their site.

Steven Ginsolley

## Letter to the Editor

I speak as a representative of Harness Funeral Home where I have been involved on many occasions in the planning and service of funeral and interments. But I also

I am Steve Gunsolley and I spent many years on the Johnson County Cemetery Board and a few terms as its president. I am currently watching that cemetery board continue to reduce services to our community. They seem to project that they are running a business instead of serving our community. Some of the changes I have seen are:

They completely took away the ability of our community to interact with the cemetery on a 24/7 basis at one location in town with trained professional staff at the Harness Funeral Home. It is in that

Just recently they added a \$400.00! charge to have burials on Saturdays

They fired an extremely dedicated and loyal Cemetery Sexton for reasons completely unknown.

It appears to not be a friendly working environment anymore. The board and staff used to work together as a team. All that seems gone now and it's almost like a dictatorship coming from the board. Willow Grove used to be a sacred place. Just driving through you could feel the serenity. I have spent times walking through the cemetery with Bill Adams and shared stories of individuals when we passed their site.

This cemetery is not a business, it is a service. It is well funded with up to 3 mills per year, although that full levy has not been taken, so money is not the issue. Let's be clear this is not about money. This board's stated intention is to "discourage"

Saturday funerals to allow cemetery staff a weekend off. This despite the fact that over half of all families who hold services on Saturdays so that they can be joined by as many family members as possible.

*Steven Gunsolley*

This board should recognize that you are stewards charged to act in the best interests of this community. This new policy is a failure to the community that you were elected to serve and it is a gross disservice to be driven by money and time off.

It is a heartless act that is not necessary. It is a flimsy argument to cite that other communities do so and therefore so should we. No one is suggesting you should not take care of your employees. Hey - I have great respect for you and the your work here. Mr. Frazier, I do not know you. But I find it astonishing that this Board cannot come up with a creative solution to accommodate employee time off and maintain service to the community. We deserve better than this.

I speak as a representative of Harness Funeral Home where I have been involved on many occasions in the planning and service of funeral and interments. But I also speak as a mother whose daughter is buried in Willow Grove Cemetery. I speak with both professional and deeply personal experience.

Anyone who has grieved, knows the intense value in the coming together of loved ones, family and friends brought about by a funeral or graveside service. It is in that fellowship that we support each other, the shared physical presence of a group huddled around a grave is a palpable source of healing and a unique experience, that only happens one time. For so many, Saturdays are the best day, and sometimes the only day, for as many as possible to gather to mourn and comfort one another. To "discourage" families from this experience is at best shameful and at worst downright cruel.

This cemetery is not a business, it is a service. It is well funded with up to 3 mills per year, although that full levy has not been taken, so money is not the issue. Let's be clear this is not about money. This Board's stated intention is to "discourage" Saturday funerals to allow cemetery staff a weekend off. This despite the fact that over half of all families want to hold services on Saturdays so that they can be joined by as many family and friends as possible.

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## MOHATT, JOHNSON & GODWIN, LLP

*Certified Public Accountants*

Everett J. Mohatt, CPA \* Michael B. Johnson, CPA \* Daniel R. Godwin, CPA \* Tommy D. Davis, CPA

Laura J. Spiegel, CPA \* Sarah J. Phillips, CPA \* Roxanne P. Ostlund, CPA

### SHERIDAN OFFICE

352 Whitney Lane - Suite 201  
P.O. Box 603 Sheridan, WY 82801  
307-672-6494 307-672-6814 fax

### BUFFALO OFFICE

820 North Main Street  
Buffalo, WY 82834  
307-684-2997 307-684-2355 fax

December 13, 2021

John Ehlers, Board Treasurer  
Johnson County Cemetery District  
351 N. Adams Ave.  
Buffalo, WY 82834

Dear Board of Directors,

We would like to express our appreciation for the opportunity to submit a proposal to help prepare the FY22 reviewed financial statements.

You have requested that we prepare the financial statements of Johnson County Cemetery District, which comprise the statement of receipts, expenditures (budget and actual) and changes in cash - cash basis as of June 30, 2022, and the related notes to the financial statements, and perform a review engagement with respect to those financial statements.

Our fees for these services will be based on time spent at our normal billing rate, which ranges from \$90 to \$135 per hour with a maximum fee of \$4,800. The fee estimate is based on anticipated cooperation from your personnel and the assumption that unexpected circumstances will not be encountered during the review. If less time is required, you will only be billed for the hours spent. If significant additional time is necessary, we will discuss it with you and arrive at a new fee estimate before we incur the additional costs.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to submit a proposal. If you would like any additional information or have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

Respectfully submitted,

*Michael B Johnson, CPA*

Michael B Johnson, CPA  
Mohatt, Johnson & Godwin, LLP