

Russellville Oakland Cemetery Commission Minutes

April 19, 2022

The Russellville Oakland Cemetery Commission met for the regular meeting on Tuesday, April 19, 2022, at 5:30 p.m. in the 2nd Floor Conference Room.

Attending in Person: City Finance Director Robin Johnson, Director Stephanie Warwick, Chairperson/Commissioner Mindy Hudson, Vice Chairperson/Commissioner Kenneth Startup, Commissioner/Secretary Rebecca Howell, Commissioner Mary Schwartz, and Liaison Phyllis Carruth

Attending via Phone: City Attorney Trey Smith

Attending via Google Meets: None

Absent: Commissioner Cindy Hlass, Mayor Richard Harris, Debi Headley from the Mayor's Office, and visitor Sean Ingram from The Courier

Chairperson Hudson welcomed all and expressed appreciation for attendance at the April Cemetery Regular meeting, which she called to order at about 5:30 p.m.

Old Business:

The First Order of Business was to review and approve the minutes from the March 15, 2022, Cemetery Regular Meeting. The motion to approve the minutes was made by Vice Chair Startup and seconded by Commissioner Schwartz. The minutes were unanimously approved.

The Second Order of Business was a presentation of the March 2022 Financial Report by Finance Director Johnson. Cash balances for March 31, 2022 were: Russellville Oakland Cemetery operating account \$102,357.53 and Bank OZK perpetual care trust account \$154,927.93. According to the March Statement of Revenues and Expenditures, \$600.00 perpetual care monies were received, and monthly results were typical.

Very important information from Director Johnson was that State law has changed so that perpetual care cemeteries may withdraw once every 10 years from money paid in. Earnings from money paid in can be used for capital improvements once appropriated from City Council. Director Johnson calculated about \$58,000.00 that might be used by Russellville Oakland Cemetery. The conversation then arose as to whether any reserve of funds might be available to Oakland, and Director Johnson gave the formula for this calculation – bank balance minus current year unspent expenditures budgeted.

The Third Order of Business was an update/presentation of bench concepts in the Mary Rye Campbell Addition. Director Warwick presented her latest thoughts about the placement of the bench and memorial plaque. In order to save ground for grave spaces, she suggested moving bench and plaque near the end to the new roadway and facing south. This would be cost effective, esthetic, and pleasing.

Also, a concrete pad will be needed, and Mr. Duvall from Public Works advises that the concrete pad can be stamped to look like stones. An estimate of cost of the concrete pad is \$450.00 without labor/sidewalks. More will be discussed next month, including wording for the plaque, and these costs will come from cemetery improvements account. Vice Chair Startup made a motion to approve the #1 bench (Classic Bench Design), with layout of the bench as in plat #2 (above paragraph), and with concrete pad reserve for cost on options/cosmetics. Commissioner Schwartz seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

The Fourth Order of Business was an update on the May 1, 2022 date of service/workshop for Decoration Month at Oakland. Director Warwick provided a list of cleaning tools/items that will be available for those who want to learn how to clean a gravestone using the D2 cleaning product. Commissioner Schwartz made a motion for Director Warwick to purchase up to \$200.00 of additional scrapers, brushes, and, then, other things usually on hand at cemetery events, such as water and refreshments. Vice Chair Startup seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Self-guided tours featuring architecture and education will be featured. Families and community members are encouraged to attend.

The Fifth Order of Business was a continued discussion concerning possible outreach for donations to help offset the anticipated expenses for erecting a fence along the east line of the cemetery. Commissioners will keep thinking about what exactly to say in a letter to prospective donors. Next year will be the 180th year of our cemetery.

The Sixth Order of Business was an open floor to the Public to address concerns/suggestions, and there were no visitors in attendance.

New Business:

The First Order of New Business was mention by Director Warwick about grounds operations. A grave was exhumed in the Gardner Addition near 11th St. and Denver Ave. In general, a dry period is needed, and lawn crew has been using their weed eaters.

Chairperson Hudson adjourned the meeting at about 6:50 p.m.