

Russellville Oakland Cemetery Commission Minutes

May 18, 2021

The Russellville Oakland Cemetery Commission met for the regular meeting on Tuesday, May 18, 2021, at 5:30 p.m. in the 2nd Floor Dining/Trophy Room.

Attending in Person: Director Stephanie Warwick, Chairperson/Commissioner Mindy Hudson, Vice Chairperson/Commissioner Kenneth Startup, Commissioner/Secretary Rebecca Howell, and Commissioner Mary Schwartz

Absent: City Finance Director Robin Johnson, City Attorney Trey Smith, Mayor Richard Harris, Debi Headley from the Mayor's Office, Commissioner Cindy Hlass, City Council Liaison Phyllis Carruth, and visitor Sean Ingram from The Courier

Chairperson Hudson opened the May 2021 Russellville Oakland Cemetery Regular Meeting at 5:37 p.m. and welcomed those in attendance.

Old Business:

The First Order of Business was to review and approve the minutes from the April 20, 2021, Cemetery Regular Meeting. The motion to approve the minutes was made by Commissioner Schwartz and seconded by Vice Chairperson Startup. The minutes were unanimously approved.

The Second Order of Business was a presentation of the April 2021 Financial Report by Commissioner Schwartz, in the absence of Finance Director Johnson. Bank account balances at 4/30/2021 were similar to the previous month - Russellville Oakland Cemetery operating account \$101,048.97 and Bank OZK perpetual care trust account \$153,212.36. As noted on the Statement of Revenues and Expenditures, April revenues were \$762.87, and the largest expenditures for April were contract labor (mowing) and grave openings. Director Warwick reported that the contract labor account showing \$2,650.00 would include replacement of a Teddy Bear Magnolia tree for \$90.00. The annual transfer of funds from the City is on its way.

The Third Order of Business was an open floor to the Public to address concerns/suggestions, and there were no visitors in attendance. Director Warwick reported that Donny Turney (River Valley Tree Service) had completed three weekly mowing/trimming/labor services, the first of which was a one-time gift to the City. The next two services were at a cost of \$1,400.00 each. One more service will take place between May 21st and May 31st. "It looks phenomenal," said Director Warwick about the look of the cemetery. Other comments of approval have come in from the community.

The Fourth Order of Business was an update concerning the roadway for the Memorial Addition. A proposed Bid from Hardrock Construction has been sent to City Council for approval and a Resolution for the same. Copies of the proposed Resolution are available. The new roadway should be finished in July, weather permitting. Schematics can then be made for the new section of the cemetery. Director Warwick hopes to designate a section for Veterans/spouses and also a section for babies. Selling grave spaces can follow, and more trees are planned for the north end. Chair Hudson remarked "wonderful news, wonderful progress."

The Fifth Order of Business was an update concerning the interim grounds maintenance of Oakland, and the Bids offered and opened on May 12th for the cemetery grounds maintenance (mowing/trimming). There were two bids received and both were considerably more than the budgeted amount for Russellville Oakland Cemetery. Both bids were for the period June 2021 through December 2022 (19 months). For comparative purposes, the bids were approximately \$5,600/month and \$4,300/month, and, for recent years, the cemetery amount for mowing/trimming has been \$2,650/month. Generally, the growing season for Oakland is March through mid-July, and mowing is needed every week. Not as much work is needed in the remaining quieter season.

Commissioners discussed whether or not these bids were in line with what is usually received from the City, in light of other projects going on at the cemetery. Among ongoing projects are lighting, fencing, plantings, tours, and the new Memorial Addition. Director Warwick said that the Commission is able to overhaul the mowing/trimming contract and the bid process. She will meet with the Finance Committee on May 20 with suggestions, and she asked Commissioners to check May 19 email to read her suggestions. Among the points made and questions posed by Commissioners: (1) Will we be competitive in our bid? (2) Is there a better way to hire for mowing, other than the 24-month contract? (3) Can we move money in the budget?

The Sixth Order of Business was a short report of Decoration Month at Oakland. Due to a prediction of stormy weather for Sunday, May 9th, Director Warwick decided to cancel our Decoration Day event at the cemetery. The rest of May is still Decoration Month, and Director Warwick is able to meet on her schedule, should interested persons wish to tour the cemetery. Chair Hudson thanked Director Warwick for all she does.

New Business:

There was no new business presented for this Russellville Oakland Cemetery Regular Meeting.

Chairperson Hudson expressed her appreciation to everyone and adjourned the meeting at about 6:40 p.m.