

Russellville Oakland Cemetery Commission Minutes

January 21, 2020

The Russellville Oakland Cemetery Commission met for the regular meeting on Tuesday, January 21, 2020, at 5:30 p.m. in the 1st Floor Conference Room.

Attending: Director Stephanie Warwick, City Attorney Trey Smith, City Finance Director Robin Johnson, Chairwoman/Commissioner Mindy Hudson, Commissioner/Secretary Rebecca Howell, Commissioner Cindy Hlass, Commissioner Kenneth Startup, City Council Liaison Justin Keller, and visitor Erin Michael from the Mayor's office

Absent: Newly-approved Commissioner Mary Moores Schwartz, Mayor Richard Harris, and visitor Sean Ingram from The Courier

Chairwoman Hudson welcomed everybody and opened the Cemetery meeting at 5:35 p.m.

Old Business:

The First Order of Business was to review and approve the minutes from the December 17, 2019, Cemetery Regular Meeting. The motion to approve the minutes was made by Commissioner Startup and seconded by Commissioner Hlass. The minutes were unanimously approved.

The Second Order of Business was a presentation of the December 2019 Financial Report by Finance Director Johnson. Balances at 12/31/19 were Bank OZK C.D. \$150,008.63 and Bank account (Russellville Fund 24) \$64,521.96. As shown on the Statement of Revenues and Expenditures, December revenues were \$971.71 and total expenditures \$11,062.22. Finance Director Johnson explained that the large expenditure amount included work on three ongoing projects – completion of West line plantings and the Hlass replacement wall job, and then starting the planting project on 8th Street. A question arose as to whether interest/dividend income from the OZK Bank perpetual care account may be used for cemetery maintenance, and Director Johnson said that it could only be used for perpetual care.

The 2020 budget was presented by Director Johnson, and a \$6,900.00 increase from the City will offset increases in office supplies (for events) and cemetery improvements. Looking back at 2019 results, both revenues and expenses were under budget by about \$8,000.00.

The Third Order of Business was not addressed. Director Warwick and Commission members did not have any concerns from the public.

The Fourth Order of Business was election of Chairperson, Vice-Chair and Secretary for the year 2020 session of the Oakland Cemetery Board. Commissioner Startup nominated Chairperson Hudson to continue in this position, and all voted in favor. Then Chairperson Hudson nominated Commissioner Startup as Vice-Chair and Commissioner/Secretary Howell as returning Secretary; these nominations were unanimously approved.

The Fifth Order of Business was the presentation of Ordinance No. 2338, presented and approved by City Council, and filed November 25, 2019. It amends Section 2.4 of the City of Russellville Oakland Cemetery Code and allows residents and non-residents of the City of Russellville to serve on the Cemetery Commission. Non-residents of the City must be unanimously approved and confirmed by City Council. Director Warwick reminded Commissioners that City Council Liaison Keller is a voting member of the Board, as a discussion ensued about new members needed. Mary Moores Schwartz was recently approved by City Council as a new Commissioner. Director Warwick estimated that members spend 22-26 hours each year attending meetings and events at the cemetery.

New Business:

The First Order of New Business was an update by Chairperson Hudson that two Willow Oak trees will soon be planted in the area (Center B) where the huge oak once stood. These trees are a gift from the Hudson family and will be planted by Walter Hudson.

The Second Order of New Business was topics for discussion at future meetings. The Detroit Ave. lane may be closed, making room for 60-80 graves. This is in the budget from City Council, but not yet approved by the Commission. Also mentioned were (a) planting of more maple trees, (b) adding another Board member, and (c) the damaged sign that will be replaced. At the March meeting fencing for Heaven's Garden may be discussed.

Chairwoman Hudson declared the meeting adjourned at about 6:10 p.m. following a motion by Liaison Keller.