

Russellville Oakland Cemetery Commission Minutes

September 20, 2022

The Russellville Oakland Cemetery Commission met for the regular meeting on Tuesday, September 20, 2022, at 5:30 p.m. in the 2nd Floor Conference Room.

Attending in Person: Director Stephanie Warwick, Chairperson/Commissioner Mindy Hudson, Commissioner/Secretary Rebecca Howell, Commissioner Mary Schwartz, and visitors George Spencer and Steve Moore

Attending via Phone: City Attorney Trey Smith

Attending via Google Meets: Vice Chairperson/Commissioner Kenneth Startup

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

Chair Mindy Hudson welcomed attendees to the September Cemetery Regular Meeting and called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Old Business:

The First Order of Business was to review and approve the minutes from the July 19, 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. Director Warwick said that she would upload to the city's website the sheet of paper showing that the August 2022 meeting was cancelled.

The Second Order of Business was a presentation of the July and August 2022 Financial Reports by Commissioner Schwartz. Cash balances for August 31, 2022 were: Russellville Oakland Cemetery operating account \$86,050.79 and Bank OZK perpetual care trust account \$155,635.00. Commissioner Schwartz explained the July and August Statements of Revenues and Expenditures. For August the \$392.00 in cemetery improvements account is for speed bumps. Director Warwick added that the new concrete pad/privacy panels for dumpster are almost finished and will be paid for next month.

The Third Order of Business was updated information for the new dumpster site, speed bumps and sidewalk/pad for bench. Director Warwick reported that Public Works Dept. has completed the two new concrete pads: one for the dumpster area, and one for the new Mary Rye Campbell Addition. This pad has a small sidewalk leading to it. New temporary speed bumps have been put into place on several of the drives in the cemetery.

The Fourth Order of Business is tabled to October. This will be a discussion concerning adding cameras/deer cameras to the cemetery.

The Fifth Order of Business was an open floor to the Public to address concerns/suggestions, and there were two visitors in attendance. The new fence project was discussed, along with a general overview of the cemetery.

New Business:

The First Order of New Business was an announcement about the Fall Oakland Cemetery Conservation Workshop – Arkansas Cemetery Preservation. Director Warwick said that it has been a long wait to be included in the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program. Rusty Brenner of Texas Cemetery Restoration will instruct at the October 22, 2022, workshop to be held at our cemetery. “This is a big deal for us . . . and I think it’s going to be a fantastic thing,” said Director Warwick. Beginning at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, October 22, attendees will learn basic repairs that we can do; cleaning techniques and other light maintenance for cemeteries, also lunch is included. The workshop concludes at 4:00 p.m.

The Second Order of New Business was a discussion about Cemetery Commissioner Terms ending December 31, 2022. Director Warwick informed the Board that Rebecca Howell will not stay on for another term, once her term ends December 31. Vice Chair/Commissioner Startup gave notice that, due to a new full-time teaching position in another town, he will immediately relinquish his position as Commissioner. Director Warwick and Commissioners thanked him for his many contributions. Director Warwick may call an emergency meeting in October to discuss the one vacancy. Also, she plans to look into whether our Commission can have six people instead of five.

The Third Order of New Business was a report by Director Warwick of mowing problems. The mowing crew, due to labor shortages, is down to one person, the owner of the company, and he is trying to continue the contract. Director Warwick plans to reach out to the city to ask if Oakland can be included with mowing responsibilities of other departments. Or, does the mowing contract need to be put out for bid, estimating that it will now cost \$85,000 - \$100,000? Before bids are made, Director Warwick plans to walk the cemetery with anyone wanting to make a bid so that they understand the scope of mowing. Mr. Startup commented that Director Warwick is doing everything possible to keep the cemetery looking its best.

Chair Hudson thanked all for attending and adjourned the meeting at about 6:14 p.m.