

Town Hill Cemetery Commission
Regular Meeting
4 PM, March 4, 2024
Location: Town Hall, New Hartford, CT

Present: Mary Lou Rayno, Debra Lindell, Nancy Linton, Donna Burdick, Anne Hall, Dan Jerram

Meeting Minutes: Motion to approve the meeting minutes of the December meeting. Motion to approve by Debra, seconded by Donna, all in favor.

Review of Jeff Deloy Contract for 2024

Mary Lou reported that she had a new contract from Pinegrove Property Maintenance (Jeff Deloy) for 2024. He has not changed anything with his prices since last year.

Motion to accept the contract. Motion by Donna, seconded by Nancy, all in favor.

Budget for 2024

Mary Lou explained that we had spend a total of \$7,050 last year. This included the removal of the old Sugar Maple by the fence, even though that check was cut in January 2024. She noted that we have approximately \$1200 in the Northwest checking account. And that last year we approved a \$4000 withdrawal from Edward Jones. This amount covered Jeff's regular work. After some discussion as to how quickly we could withdraw money from Edward Jones, it was decided to approve another \$4000 withdrawal to cover regular costs for the year.

Motion to move \$4000 from Edward Jones to the checking account for regular maintenance: Motion by Donna, seconded by Debra, all in favor.

Monument Repair:

Due to ongoing weather issues John Ciesco has not been able to visit the cemetery to evaluate stones. He still intends to do so. Anne mentioned that getting a good photograph record of the older brownstones in particular would be of historic value. There was agreement on this.

At this time, Gary Nicksa from Edward Jones arrived to give his report.

Gary Nicksa reviewed the endowment's risk. He stated that it is currently a 'moderate risk account' dominated by Washington Mutual and American Mutual. These funds have less exposure to the tech industry in particular and therefore reduced volatility. They don't make as much money but they don't lose as much. He feels that based on the need for in perpetuity funding and the need to make withdrawals at unspecified times, regardless of the market conditions, in order to fund maintenance this moderate risk remains appropriate. Nancy asked about the historic performance of the fund and whether we were drawing down principal. Gary said that no, that was not the case. It was determined that leaving the fund's management as it is was appropriate.

In the course of the discussion, the tax ID number was questioned. The fund remains under the tax ID of Edward Jones and not the town. There may be an issue with this as Edward Jones is not a municipal fund manager. However, Dan pointed out that the endowment predates the town's involvement in it and is completely sequestered from the town's other funds and can only be used for the cemetery. The arrangement has been annually part of the town's audit. Dan will check if this arrangement is appropriate. He will also check to see if the town's other endowments (pension and 401k) can handle the endowment if Edward Jones is no longer able to.

Gary left at this point.

The discussion returned to the idea of photographing the stones. Nancy suggested that it might be a good project for a school group to work on. Debra suggested that it would be nice to have more information about the people as well. Anne questioned how the stones were identified in the database. Currently it is by name. No action was taken on this topic, but there was agreement that it should be thought about further.

Fenceline Maple Tree: Mary Lou reported that the maple tree was removed by Bristol Tree with no damage to anything else.

Request by Bartram Family to remove stones: Mary Lou has reached out to the family to request written documentation for the request. She has not heard back and suspects they have decided not to pursue it at the time. No action.

Other business: It was decided to set a special meeting for April 1st to review the bylaws.

Motion to adjourn: Made by Nancy, seconded by Donna, all in favor.