

# Town of Gilford, New Hampshire

## Budget Committee

### REPORT OF THE CEMETERIES SUBCOMMITTEE – OCTOBER 24, 2018

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The subcommittee of the Gilford Budget Committee assigned to review the Cemeteries budget met at 3:00 PM on 10/24, 2018 in Town Hall Conference Room A.

Subcommittee members Kristin Snow, Peter Karagianis, and Tim Sullivan met with Cemeteries Trustee Susan Leach. Dee Chitty was unexpectedly not in attendance.

Each line item of the proposed Cemeteries Budget as recommended by the Board of Selectmen was reviewed. Discussions ensued over several items.

Susan reported that the Trustees continue to have great difficulty filling the caretaker positions, which are budgeted at full-time for 27 weeks from spring through autumn. The caretakers are responsible for maintaining Pine Grove Cemetery and many private cemeteries (see \*Addendum below for exact numbers). In 2016 and 2017, the amount budgeted for salaries was not fully spent. For 2018 to date, the Budget Worksheet shows \$6,437 actual paid for seasonal wages from a budget of \$26,000. Two part-time employees have done all work this year, with some volunteer assistance from Gilford High School students.

The Trustees request a raise from \$12.50 per hour to \$13.75 per hour to improve hiring efforts. Subcommittee members were in general support of this request. There remained concern that the positions would continue to be difficult to fill. We brainstormed other options:

- Hiring a contractor to do all caretaker work. This had been considered by the Trustees and was thought to be prohibitively expensive.
- Contracting out spring and fall cleanup tasks, with workers hired during the summer months to do regular and maintenance tasks.

Trustee Expenses of \$290 is requested for NH Cemetery Dues and attendance at two conferences.

General Expenses of \$1250 is requested for supplies, help wanted advertisements, and burial vaults. It was noted that burial vault costs are offset by burial charges paid directly to the Town. Susan reported that 14 vaults have been sold this year at \$400 per vault. It was not known how much the vaults cost the town to purchase, nor which account shows this revenue. It was noted that General Expenses in 2017 and 2018 have run higher than budgeted costs.

New Equipment of \$1500 is requested for a new utility trailer. It was noted that equipment purchased in 2018 cost \$311 more than budgeted.

Grounds Maintenance expenses of \$18,750 is requested. The bulk of this request is for \$6500 of tree removal and \$9000 in grub control. A tree contractor will be hired to remove several diseased and dying large pine trees at the rear and left side of Pine Grove Cemetery. Belknap Landscape will be hired to do

grub control treatments at 3 cemeteries. Susan Leach said this contractor has done this job well in past years.

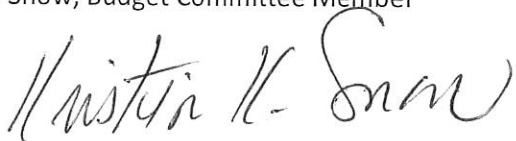
The Cemeteries Trustees requested that the Board of Selectmen appropriate \$10,000 into a Columbarium Fund, to facilitate the construction of a columbarium at Pine Grove Cemetery, at a total estimated cost of \$45,000, possibly as a Warrant Article. A columbarium would hold niches for storage of funeral urns. Because the town is running low on space for burials, a columbarium could help alleviate this concern. The subcommittee members noted that there is a Special Revenue Cemetery Fund with a balance of \$45,720 as of 1/1/2018. It was not known how this Fund was filled, or how the monies could be used. We suggested the Cemeteries Trustees discuss this request with the Town Administrator. The subcommittee members will also raise this issue for discussion at the meeting the full Budget Committee.

The subcommittee deferred approval of this budget request to the full Budget Committee. That meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 8, 2018 at 6:30 pm in Town Hall. The subcommittee meeting was adjourned at 4:05 pm.

\*Addendum: After the meeting, Susan Leach provided a list of 22 Cemeteries in Gilford (Pine Grove Cemetery and 21 private cemeteries). Pine Grove Cemetery, 11 private cemeteries, and a Pest House marker on Goodwin Road are all cared for by the Trustees of Gilford Cemeteries.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristin Snow, Budget Committee Member

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kristin H. Snow". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name.