

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE
UNION CEMETERY COMMITTEE
Mayfield Village Main Conference Room-Mayfield Village Civic Center
6622 Wilson Mills Road, Mayfield Village, Ohio
Wednesday, February 21, 2024 –2:00 p.m.**

The Union Cemetery Committee met on Wednesday, February 21, 2024 in the Main Conference Room at the Mayfield Village Civic Center. Mr. Murphy called the meeting to order at 2:03 p.m.

Present: Mr. DeJohn (Mayfield Heights)
Ms. D’Amico (Highland Heights)
Mr. Murphy (Mayfield Village)

Also Present: Mr. Meyers
Mrs. Betsa

. **Election of Chairman for 2024.**

Mr. DeJohn, seconded by Ms. D’Amico, elected Mr. Murphy as Chairman for 2024.

ROLL CALL:	Ayes: All	Motion Carried
	Nays: None	Mr. Murphy Elected Chairman of the Union Cemetery Committee for 2024

. **Election of Vice-Chairman for 2024.**

Ms. D’Amico, seconded by Chairman Murphy, elected Mr. DeJohn as Vice-Chairman for 2024.

ROLL CALL:	Ayes: All	Motion Carried
	Nays: None	Mr. DeJohn Elected Vice-Chairman of the Union Cemetery Committee for 2024

. **Approval of the Minutes of April 24, 2023**

Chairman Murphy, seconded by Ms. D’Amico, moved to approve the Minutes of April 24, 2023.

ROLL CALL:	Ayes: All	Motion Carried
	Nays: None	April 24, 2023 Minutes Approved

. **Review of Rules and Regulations**

The Committee reviewed the Rules and Regulations of the Union Cemetery. There were no revisions necessary.

. **Review of Financial Reports**

The Committee reviewed the financial reports for 2023.

Mr. Meyers asked, is maintenance part of the \$1,000 paid by each municipality?

Chairman Murphy replied, the \$1,000 is just for the upkeep. Mayfield Village keeps up with what they can and charges the Union Cemetery back based on calculation from our Finance Director Ron Wynne.

Ms. D'Amico asked, is Union Cemetery an entity that pays money?

Mr. Meyers stated, that's why I was asking. Chuck called me. He said no one has ever asked them to send someone. He said we have no problem sending someone and each municipality maintains the lawn for one month. The Union Cemetery Fund pays for the Service Department. It comes out of the fund. The Village takes care of the maintenance. Chuck offered to have someone from Highland Heights do it. It could be a shared entity between Mayfield Village, Mayfield Heights and Highland Heights.

Chairman Murphy stated, Mayfield Village had always done it.

Mrs. Betsa clarified for the Committee that previously there was a sexton who got paid \$600 per year for the upkeep. He moved away. The Service Department took over after that. Around 2019, the Committee started getting charged for the work performed by the Service Department for the upkeep.

Mr. Meyers stated before that it was taken care of. I think that was because of Patsy.

Chairman Murphy stated, if he says he wants to mow it a month, fine.

Mr. Meyers stated, or pitch in. Figure out some kind of schedule.

Ms. D'Amico asked, what is the cost?

Chairman Murphy replied, we use Dyna Green as a third-party service for fertilization.

Ms. D'Amico asked, what's VanCuren?

Chairman Murphy stated, that's a tree service. Last year myself and the other two members did a walk-through at the Cemetery. Someone commented that the west side drive was a little overgrown. It was then cut back and it's now much nicer.

Ms. D'Amico stated, it's \$880.00 for DynaGreen. Would it make sense to increase our City dues at least enough to cover these kind of expenses?

Chairman Murphy stated, the Service Department charged \$1,150.00 for cutting the grass and miscellaneous other things to maintain it.

Ms. D'Amico stated, I think the Mayor would rather pay more dues than sending our guys out.

Chairman Murphy stated, DynaGreen seems pretty reasonable based on quotes I got from my house. The expense for the Cemetery is \$220.00 for 4 visits. We should consider increasing the dues.

Ms. D'Amico asked, do the cities own the cemetery?

Chairman Murphy replied, we are all listed on the deed. I will double check that.

Mr. Meyers asked, is there a history of the cemetery somewhere?

Mrs. Betsa stated, I included that in the back of your packets. The Mayfield Village Historical Society also has documentation as well.

Chairman Murphy replied, the Board of Trustees of the Mayfield Union Cemetery district is comprised of one member of each municipality. Gates Mills used to be included. I think it's because they have two of their own cemeteries.

Ms. D'Amico stated, it says here that this Cemetery was established in 1847 for the four communities of Gates Mills, Highland Heights, Mayfield Village and Mayfield Heights. When they set this up, they never set up any reserve to keep this going, right?

Chairman Murphy replied, no.

Ms. D'Amico asked, does it have any kind of historical marker from the State on it?

Chairman Murphy replied, I think there is. Al, do you recall? Is there an Ohio Historical marker on that?

Mr. Meyers replied, I believe there is one at that monument in the back.

Mr. DeJohn asked, are there any old pictures of it anywhere?

Mr. Meyers replied, the Bennett-Van Curen house has all of the records.

Chairman Murphy stated, the other thing is Ohio recently changed its requirements for certain entities. Union Cemetery falls into it. An audit of Union Cemetery is now required. The State of Ohio performs the audit. We are not sure how much it is going to cost. I will keep everyone updated in that regard.

. **Restoration Work at Union Cemetery**

Chairman Murphy stated, we have gotten some calls on the headstones looking distressed. We did a walk through at the Cemetery with the three of us and Lenny, Acting Service Director.

Mr. Meyers asked, what do you mean by distressed?

Chairman Murphy replied, there are headstones which have fallen over. Some are cracked.

Mr. DeJohn asked, what are you going to do about the cracked ones? You can reset the monuments and the headstones.

Chairman Murphy replied, mostly it was about resetting them. I don't know what they can do if they are cracked. We received a quote from Milano. There are 21 broken/detached stones. Some fell over. You can just stand them up and put in some adhesive. I don't know how well that would work. During the walk through, we got an idea of what we wanted. Milano came out and talked with us. I think it would be a good idea to get another quote.

Mr. DeJohn suggested contact be placed to Johns-Carabelli.

Chairman Murphy suggested contact be placed to Graveyard Groomer in Indiana. Milano is proposing a three year plan with three phases. Each phase would be almost \$35,000. They are willing to do as many phases as we want with a minimum amount of \$15,000 per phase. With that being said, we have reached out to Cuyahoga County for a possible grant to any veterans who are buried there.

Ms. D'Amico asked, how many stones are in the cemetery?

Chairman Murphy replied, 151. A number of them are distressed. Best case scenario a little less than a quarter of them need repair.

Mr. DeJohn asked, how is this going to be funded?

Chairman Murphy replied, it was going to be funded by the three municipalities when we had discussions last year but they were stalled.

Mr. DeJohn asked, and it stalled because?

Chairman Murphy replied, we hadn't gotten the quote yet. We ran out of time with the weather. Here we are picking up the pieces. We are looking at a minimum \$15,000 or maybe you guys aren't for this.

Ms. D'Amico asked, what happens if you don't though, it just falls apart and becomes an eyesore?

Chairman Murphy replied, yes. We have to do it.

Ms. D'Amico stated, I think we need to do it too.

Mr. DeJohn asked, back in the day, there wasn't any perpetual care, right?

Chairman Murphy replied, no. It cost \$6.00 for the opening and closing.

Mr. DeJohn's stated, perpetual care is when you buy a cemetery lot and you pay perpetual care which goes into a trust fund which is used for maintenance if the cemetery is need of the money for the upkeep.

Chairman Murphy stated, based on other communities, like Gates Mills, they are not charging nearly enough for perpetual care.

Mr. DeJohn stated, so we definitely need to raise our contributions.

Chairman Murphy stated, it comes back full circle to we have been getting \$1,000 per municipality for as long as anyone can remember. What's that magic number is the thing?

Ms. D'Amico asked, would it make sense to raise that \$1,000 to be used for the yearly maintenance? Repair of the headstones would have to be treated separately.

Chairman Murphy stated, that's a good idea. Let's pick a number right now. Excluding the headstone repair, what would the cemetery survive on? Maybe after we get another quote or two we reconvene.

Ms. D'Amico stated, right now the expenses are at \$4,200. If everyone paid \$3,000, that would give you a little slush fund for a few years. You would have a \$4,800 cushion.

Chairman Murphy stated, I think that's reasonable. Do you think your municipalities would be okay with that?

Ms. D'Amico stated, I am going to have to talk to Chuck about it.

Mr. DeJohn stated, I can't imagine they would say no to it. If they do say no, what's their suggestion? Obviously they are going to ask about grants for the restoration. We are going to have to do our homework on that.

Mr. Meyers asked, did the County say how much was available?

Mrs. Betsa replied, if they were veterans, there would be no charge to restore the headstone. I don't know how many veterans there are there.

Chairman Murphy asked, doesn't someone come and put a wreath on a grave?

Mrs. Betsa replied, the Halliday grave. There's money that's specific to that which was put in by the family. The Boy Scouts put flags up for Memorial Day.

Mr. Meyers stated, maybe Mary Singer might know how many veterans are buried there.

Mr. DeJohn asked, is there any way we could start a fundraiser between the three communities to help fund this restoration?

Ms. D'Amico stated, we started one in Highland Heights at a Seniors event for Knox Boxes. We held a 50/50 raffle for those who could not afford a Knox Box that wanted one.

Chairman Murphy stated, Cruise Night donations in the past have gone to a good cause. Maybe we can collect donations for the Cemetery.

Mr. DeJohn stated, same thing with Mayfield Heights. Maybe at their events too. We could get put it in the newspaper.

Ms. D'Amico stated, we could have a box at funeral homes for donations to the Cemetery. You won't get a ton of money, but you will get some.

Mr. DeJohn stated, maybe we could get the funeral homes to contribute to it. We could put a plaque up front with their names on it.

Chairman Murphy stated, I have a feeling we are going to talk about this after we get more quotes.

Mr. DeJohn stated, I agree. Who will contact the other companies?

Chairman Murphy stated, Mary Beth will. She talked to Milano.

Mr. DeJohn asked, so you will talk to Johns-Carabelli and the Indiana company?

Mrs. Betsa replied, yes.

. **Motion to accept the financial report as submitted.**

Chairman Murphy, seconded by Ms. D'Amico, made a motion to accept the financial report as submitted.

Chairman Murphy asked, discussion?

There was none.

ROLL CALL:	Ayes: All	Motion Carried
	Nays: None	Financial Report accepted

Chairman Murphy asked, do we have to do anything formal for the \$3,000 at this point?

Mr. DeJohn stated, I would think so.

Ms. D'Amico stated, I have to go back and have L&F approve it.

Chairman Murphy asked, do we approve it now? Or do we reconvene once we get approval?

Ms. D'Amico stated, I would like to run it past L&F. I want to make sure the Mayor thinks this would make more sense.

Chairman Murphy stated, let's see if \$3,000 works for everyone and we can vote about it when we reconvene. Is that okay with everyone?

The Committee agreed.

ANY OTHER MATTERS

Chairman Murphy asked, are there any other matters to come before this Committee?

There were none.

Chairman Murphy stated, we will keep everyone updated. Once we have the information, we will schedule a meeting.

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ADJOURNMENT

There being no further matters, Chairman Murphy, seconded by Mr. DeJohn, made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary E. Betsa, MMC, Secretary