

Cemetery Committee Minutes – August, 5 2009

Present: Councilman Michael Barber (Chair), Councilman Brad Stipes, Mayor Ballengee, Lance Terpenney, Adam Carpenetti

Brought up for discussion were the following items: Fees for the sale of plots and opening and closing, collecting of the bills, no burial dates, planting of flowers, and placing of monuments.

The fees for the sale of plots and opening and closing were discussed to bring revenues closer to the expenses. Prices for plots were from raised \$700 to \$800 for section Y. All other sections increased from \$650 to \$700.

Fees for opening and closing were also increased. Weekday rates are up to \$700 from \$550. Weekends are now \$900, up from \$650. Weekday cremations and infants are \$250 up from \$175. Weekend cremations and infants are \$500 up from \$300.

Increases were based on recent data from Funeral Consumers Alliance of the Virginia Blue Ridge that showed the fees were slightly lower than average of surrounding cemeteries. Another influence to increase fees was the manpower it takes for opening and closing. Preparation for funerals, on average, can take anywhere from five to eight hours. The Committee agreed that all fees set need to cover the expenses (equipment and salaries) incurred by the Town.

The Town has many bills that have gone uncollected. Some customers argue that no more money is available to pay the Town or they thought everything was included by the funeral home. If a burial takes place and there is outstanding debt, the Town has little recourse for collecting the money since services have already been provided and the plot has already been used. In the past, the rules have stated that customers have up to one year to pay debts with 20 percent down. This has been increasingly difficult to enforce after a burial has already taken place.

The Committee is recommending collecting all fees, up-front, before any business is conducted. If there is any outstanding balance on the customer's account, whether it is for the purchase of a plot and/or fee for opening and closing, this needs to be collected before the Town will prepare for an upcoming funeral. The Town will be working much closer with funeral homes to ensure this money is collected before-hand or the Town will bill the funeral home for any outstanding balance. Customers have the ability to pay on the account up to one year, with 20 percent down, or before using the lot, whichever is sooner.

No burial dates will remain as Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Memorial Day, July 4, and Easter. However, weekend rates apply for any other holiday observed by the Town to help cover the costs of having Town employees working overtime.

After a few examples were shown of raised flower beds, bushes or shrubs that were planted, and flowers that have become unsightly, the Committee is recommending no new planting of any kind. All flowers and/or decorations are to be affixed to the monuments to help maintain the landscaping of the cemetery. Artificial flowers will not be allowed between April 1 and October 31.

To help enforce payments, no monuments can be set until all debts are paid. If the monument spans two or more plots, all plots must be paid for in full and any outstanding debt for opening and closing on the account must be paid in full as well.

Cemetery Committee Notes for August 5, 2009

FY Updates

- From fiscal year 2008-2009, the Town has collected \$49,624.51 from the sale of lots and \$51,340.51 from opening and closing.
- There were 93 total burials in FY 08-09
 - o 11 were cremations or infants
 - o 30 were on the weekend

Current Cemetery Rules

Fees

- o Plots
 - o Section Y (newest section): \$700.00
 - o All others: \$650.00
 - 20% down is required
 - Payments can be made up to 1 year. After 1 year, the cemetery has the authority to repossess all unpaid lots without refund.
- o Opening and Closing
 - o Weekday: \$550.00
 - o Weekend: \$650.00
 - o Weekday Cremations: \$175.00
 - o Weekend Cremations \$300.00

No Burial Dates

Thanksgiving
Christmas Day
New Year's Day
Memorial Day
July 4th
Easter

In addition, there will be no burials after noon on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve. Exceptions may be made by the board with an increased price.

Monuments

- o No monuments will be set by individual persons.
- o Prior consent is required by any company.
- o Base, depth, etc. will be as Sunset requires.
 - o For companion monuments with a base size of 4 feet to 6 feet, the cement foundation should be at least 18 to 20 inches deep. For base sizes over 6 feet, at least 24 inches deep.
 - o Single monuments with a base size of 2 feet to 3 1/2 feet, the cement foundation should be at least 16 to 18 inches deep.
 - o All markers, single or companion, require cement foundations at least 14 inches deep.
 - o Cement has to be wet. Dry cement mixed with water can be used. The ground does not have enough moisture for the dry cement to set.
- o Twenty four hour notice is required.
- o Please check in with groundskeeper on arrival.

General Rules and Regulations

1. Only human remains are permitted to be buried within the cemetery.
2. Temporary markers placed at the time of interment are not considered permanent. Sunset cemetery is not responsible for the condition of temporary makers.
3. The sale or transfer of any interment right by any owner shall not be binding upon the cemetery unless it shall first be duly approved in writing and duly recorded in the cemetery office by authorized representative of Sunset Cemetery. All transfers of ownership may be subject to a nominal transfer fee of \$20.00.
4. All graves shall be opened and closed by Sunset Cemetery. The Town of Christiansburg shall not be responsible for the grave preparation unless a twenty-four (24) hour notice has been given.
5. Burial vaults shall be required on all burials excluding cremains. Vaults must be construction of concrete or steel.
6. Only one person may be buried in a grave site (plot) except for:
 - o One adult and one infant
 - o Two infants
 - o Four cremations
 - o One adult or infant and one cremation
7. The scattering of ashes in Sunset Cemetery in not permitted
8. Sunset Cemetery requires a minimum of twenty-four hours notice to schedule the manpower and Town equipment necessary to open the grave in time for the burial. The funeral director shall supply such notice. Funeral directors must present all burial documents upon arrival in the cemetery. The funeral director shall provide artificial grass, lowering devices, tent and chairs and any other materials or equipment associated with the burial ceremony.
9. No decorative landscaping stones, fencing, curbs. It is not permissible to place fences or curbs on any lot. Temporary decorative memorabilia must be removed within thirty (30) days. No permanent decorative objects are permitted. The cemetery has the right to remove non-conforming items from any lot after an attempt has been made to contact the lot owner to remove said item.
10. The placement of flags on veterans' graves will be done for Memorial Day and Veteran's Day and then removed.
11. The Town of Christiansburg shall not be liable for loss or breakage of floral pieces, baskets, pots or frames in which such floral pieces are attached or contained beyond the day of burials.
12. Fresh flowers will be picked up by cemetery personnel, without prior notice, when they become unsightly.
13. All funeral flowers must be removed within (10) days of the funeral. They will be removed and discarded by the cemetery caretaker.
14. No flowers, shrubs, trees or vegetation of any type shall be planted without the approval of the Cemeterian. Any of the foregoing items planted without such approval may be removed.

Removal of Flowers

- o Christmas Flower - Feb. 1.
- o Easer Flowers - May 1 unless Easter is in March, the will be 30 days later.
- o Other holidays - 30 days later.
- o Funeral flowers - 7-10 day after funeral

Placement and removal of Flowers and Ornaments

- Artificial flowers are welcomed in the cemetery, but they must be affixed to the base or top of monuments, if possible. The cemetery is very windy and flowers regularly blow away. Blown flowers removed on regular basis.
- Flowers and ornaments that extend beyond the base of monument may be removed, should maintenance become a problem.

- Broken items will be removed from sites and not saved.
- Any faded flowers or flowers with weeds growing through them will be removed.
- Funeral flowers will be removed 7 to 10 days after the burial.
- Christmas flowers will be removed beginning February 28th.
- Easter flowers will be removed beginning May 1st.
- If you wish to keep any flowers or arrangements, you should pick them up before the schedule removal.
- Individuals wishing to plant trees or shrubs must contact and get approval with cemetery management and meet on site prior to planting.
- Vandalism, damage and theft are very rare in Sunset, but please be aware the Sunset Cemetery management is not responsible for any items left in the cemetery that becomes missing or damaged (i.e. flowers, ornaments, trinkets', etc.)

Items to Address at Meeting

- Pricing
- Payment Terms
- Decorations and Landscaping
- Setting of monuments
- Changing no burial dates to all Town Holidays

Cemetery Committee Notes

August 5, 2009

Fees:

Sale of Plots

- Section Y: \$800 (up from \$700)
- All others: \$700 (up from \$650)

Opening and Closing

- Weekday: \$700 (up from \$550)
- Weekend: \$900 (up from \$650)
- Weekday Cremation: \$250 (up from \$175)
- Weekend Cremation: \$500 (up from \$300)

The Town will be billing the funeral home for the opening closing unless it is paid in full beforehand.

The Town will also bill the funeral home for any portion of the unpaid lot that is being used.

A contract will be signed between the Town and funeral homes to ensure they understand the funerals homes are responsible for any outstanding balance from the sale of the plot and opening and closing.

The Town will still accept 20% down and payments up to 1 year or until the plot(s) are used.

No Burial Dates:

Thanksgiving

Christmas Eve

Christmas Day

New Year's Eve

New Year's Day

Memorial Day

July 4th

Easter

Weekend rates apply for any other Town observed holiday.

Flowers and Monuments

No new planting.

All decorations and flowers must be affixed to the monuments.

No artificial flowers between April 1 and October 31.

Monuments cannot be placed until all respective plots are paid in full.

**Survey of Licensed and Municipal Cemeteries
Funeral Consumers Alliance of the Virginia Blue Ridge**

Cemetery	Memorial Gardens of NRV	Westview	Mountain View Memorial Park	Roselawn Memorial Gardens	Sunset	Rest Vale	Dublin Cemetery	Highland Memory Gardens
Location	Blacksburg	Blacksburg	Boones Mill	Christiansburg	Christiansburg	Copper Hill	Dublin	Dublin
Price List Date	7/1/2008	no date	2009	7/15/2008	no date	no date	1990/91	1/5/2009
In Ground Burial Options	Range in \$	Range in \$	Range in \$	Range in \$	Range in \$	Range in \$	Range in \$	Range in \$
Standard Space	1,200-1,500	500-1,000	700-1,550	550-1,200	650-700	400	150-275	1,345-2,245
Cemetery Service Fees								
Ground Burial, Weekday	800	500	400-1,200	800 before 3PM	550			1,070 before 3PM
Ground Burial, Saturday	900	550		900-1,300	650			
Cremains, Ground Burial, Weekday	185-4540	200-250		350 before 3PM				
Cremains, Ground Burial, Saturday	235-500			450-525				
Transfer of Ownership	75							
Memorials								
Installation Fees	.55 per sq. in.	.25 per sq. in.	.85 per sq. in.					.45 per sq. in.

Cemetery	Sunrise Burial Park	Jacksonville	Birchlawn Burial Park	Oakwood/Pinehurst	Mountain View	Blue Ridge Memorial Gardens	Cedar Lawn	Evergreen Burial Park
Location	Fairlawn	Floyd	Pearisburg	Pulaski	Ridgeway	Roanoke	Roanoke	Roanoke
Price List Date	1/5/2009	2/26/2009	1/1/2009	3/5/2009	2/12/2009	11/6/2008	12/1/2008	2008
In Ground Burial Options	Range in \$	Range in \$	Range in \$	Range in \$	Range in \$	Range in \$	Range in \$	Range in \$
Standard Space	1,345-2,245	450	525-1,250	275-350	892-1,092	1,345-2,245	1,100-1,350	550-1,750
Cemetery Service Fees								
Ground Burial, Weekday	1,070 before 3PM		865-1,265		1,080	1,070 before 3PM	1,095 before 4 PM	1,100
Ground Burial, Saturday	1,370-1,710		270-330		1,280	1,370	1,095 before 1PM	
Cremains, Ground Burial, Weekday	680 before 3PM				570	680 before 3PM	500 before 4PM	
Cremains, Ground Burial, Saturday	980-1,180				770	980-1,180	500 before 1PM	
Transfer of Ownership	95				free	95	100	
Memorials								
Installation Fees	.45 per sq. in.				309-833	.45 per sq. in.	.90-1.00 per sq. in.	.85 per sq. in.

**Survey of Licensed and Municipal Cemeteries
Funeral Consumers Alliance of the Virginia Blue Ridge**

Cemetery	Fairview	Old Dominion Gardens	Williams Memorial Park	Franklin Memorial Park	East Hill Cemetery	Sherwood Memorial Park	Patrick Memorial Gardens	Mountain View
Location	Roanoke	Roanoke	Roanoke	Rocky Mount	Salem	Salem	Stuart	Vinton
Price List Date	12/1/2008	3/16/2009	no date	2/3/2009	1/20/2009	12/5/2008	1/1/2009	6/1/2008
In Ground Burial Options	Range in \$	Range in \$	Range in \$	Range in \$	Range in \$	Range in \$	Range in \$	Range in \$
Standard Space	1,100-1,350	1,147-1,292	850	595-1,000	800		1,295	900
Cemetery Service Fees								
Ground Burial, Weekday	1,095 before 4PM	1,134 before 3:45	850	900 before 3PM	800	1,195	845	900
Ground Burial, Saturday	1,095 before 1PM	1,344	950	1,000 before 3PM		1,395 before 1PM	945/1,045 Sun	1,000 AM
Cremains, Ground Burial, Weekday	500 before 4PM	598 before 3:45	250	600 before 3PM	450	650	350	450
Cremains, Ground Burial, Saturday	500 before 1PM	809	350	700 before 3PM		750 before 1PM	400/450 Sun	500 AM
Transfer of Ownership	100			25		100		
Memorials								
Installation Fees	.90 per sq. in.	634-875		.55 per sq. in.		540-1,050	.75 per sq. in.	