

**CEMETERY COMMISSION MEETING  
LAKE FOREST CEMETERY ZOOM MEETING MINUTES  
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2021, 5:00 P.M.**

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT**

John Anderson, Chairman  
Robert Thornburgh  
Rommy Lopat  
Lowell Dixon  
Robert Wayne

**STAFF PRESENT**

Chuck Myers, Superintendent of Parks & Forestry  
Phil Alderks, Cemetery Sexton  
Dustin Anand, Management Analyst

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Tony Hoban, William Blair  
Tim Gleason, William Blair

**I. ROLL CALL, CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Anderson called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m., and adjusted the order of the agenda to move forward the presentation of the Wm. Blair Investment Report,

**II. THIRD QUARTER INVESTMENT REPORT- TONY HOBAN**

Investment advisor Tony Hoban, with colleague Tim Gleason from Wm. Blair, presented the Third Quarter Investment Report. Hoban reported that overall portfolio performance during the quarter was good, although markets had not moved much and hence movement in the combined account values was modest. The total portfolio was up roughly +1% with equity up +1.4% and fixed income down - 0.2%. He reported that accounts had outperformed benchmarks except for fixed income, which had underperformed benchmarks by -0.3%. He noted that performance vs. benchmarks over the past 3 to 5 years has been favorable.

Regarding the asset allocation in the portfolio, Hoban noted that although the equity market had performed well while the bond market performance had been weaker, the heavier emphasis on equity investments has been toned down somewhat to avoid being overweight in equities relative to established target ranges in the Commission's Investment Policy.

Chairman Anderson pointed out that the approved \$222,000 transfer from the Commission Care Funds Account to the Commission Account (for services related to Endowed Trust Funds established for certain family lots) had occurred on October 15, 2021, after the effective date of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter investment report,

Hoban briefly reviewed common stock investment noting no significant changes, and then he provided an overall market summary. In terms of future asset allocation, Hoban said that he believes equities will still perform better than fixed income (although becoming relatively more "expensive"), and he favors staying weighted modestly heavier in equities for the near term. Commissioner Dixon asked Hoban about bond duration, and Hoban said that Wm. Blair favored short to medium duration based on a number of factors at this point.

A motion was made by Commissioner Wayne and seconded by Commissioner Dixon for Wm. Blair to continue with the current investment strategy. Motion passed unanimously.

**III. APPROVAL OF JULY 28, 2021 MINUTES – JOHN ANDERSON**

Chairman Anderson presented the July 28, 2021 Cemetery Commission Meetings Minutes for approval. Commissioner Lopat pointed out a typo under Item XI. She also requested revisions for "Other Matters." Regarding cleaning of memorials, she asked that 'all the' be replaced with 'unreadable' as well as add 'discuss how this can be accomplished in the future and whether the Cemetery has any legal liability.' Also, she requested the addition of 'Review the photo

book and have it passed around to the other Commissioners along with a general review the brochures that we have.'

Commissioner Lopat motioned to accept the July 28, 2021 Cemetery Commission Meeting Minutes as modified. Seconded by Commissioner Thornburgh and passed unanimously.

#### **IV. REVENUE/EXPENSE REPORT – PHIL ALDERKS**

Cemetery Sexton Alderks presented the September 30, 2021 Revenue and Expense Report to the Commission. He reported that lot sales were below the budget for the 5-month period, but niche sales exceeded budget and service charges were more than double the budgeted revenue for this same period. Additionally, over the past month, the Cemetery had \$97,500.00 in graves sold and \$10,200 in niches sold, and these sales are not yet reflected in the report.

Alderks then explained that expenses are below budget due to various issues including impact of the coronavirus pandemic along with the inability to secure staff. Alderks said maintenance expenses, like space sales, are also 'lumpy' in that many of the actual expenses are dependent on the time of year. For example, plant purchases are typically higher in the fall and spring, and this year we did not do as much planting due to COVID.

Commissioner Thornburgh asked about funding for capital expenditures such as the ravine restoration, etc. Alderks explained that funding for large capital projects like the Memorial Garden Phase II would be financed, but projects such as the Sawyer Ravine Restoration are currently being paid out of operating funds as long as funds are available. However, if sufficient operating funds were not available, the remainder would come from the investment accounts.

Commissioner Thornburgh suggested that our financial statement include reporting that shows the source and use of funds for capital expenditures. Chairman Anderson, Commissioner Thornburgh, and Sexton Alderks will discuss this and make changes to the Revenue-Expense Report as needed before the January Commission meeting.

#### **V. CEMETERY UPDATES – VARIOUS MEMBERS**

*Update on Memorial Garden Phase II Project:* Superintendent Myers stated that he has asked Craig Bergmann Landscape Design to provide a timeframe and a proposal to create construction documents for the Phase II project. He said Bergmann is currently extremely busy and would not be able to begin work on the documents until after January 2022. Myers noted that since the construction of the Spire has been deferred and not included in this project, the Cemetery did add the renovation of a substantial amount of bluestone as recommended by the Commission Subcommittee. Myers indicated that Bergmann will generate estimates for the entire project costs after they have completed the design work, at which time the Cemetery Commission may direct their attention to funding options with the City of Lake Forest Finance Director. Myers indicated that a special meeting may be needed in February to discuss financing.

Myers said that the niche units are manufactured only by one company, Eichoff Columbaria. Eichoff currently has an estimated lead time of 5 to 7 months from finalized order and requires a signed contract with a one-third deposit (roughly \$60,000). The overall cost of the niches and niche fronts is estimated to be \$179,000.00. Myers explained that the construction schedule is dependent on the availability of the niche units, and these would need to be ordered in January to get the project completed during the 2022 construction season. He said that if construction would be delayed, the Cemetery will store the units until the project work can start.

Myers said that he has developed a draft timeline for the project but acknowledged that this could be too optimistic. This draft timeline includes development and finalization of construction plans between January and March 2022, with the order for new niches placed in January because of the necessary lead time. The draft timeline includes a presentation to the Historic Preservation Commission, finalization of permits with the City, and release of bid invitation all during March. After that, the bid opening is targeted for mid-April, and then the Cemetery Commission would discuss final approval of contract terms in the April 2022 meeting. Myers would then present to City Council for final approval on May 2<sup>nd</sup> and the contract would be awarded to the successful bidder in early May. Construction could then begin at some point after Memorial Day, with a final construction deadline of October 2022. Myers reiterated that this schedule is very tentative and based on contractor schedules, construction supply availability, and weather conditions.

#### **VI. CONSIDERATION OF CEMETERY FY2023 FEES AND CHARGES – JOHN ANDERSON AND PHIL ALDERKS**

Sexton Alderks and Chairman Anderson presented the Cemetery's proposed fees and service charges for fiscal year 2023. Anderson asked how these fees and charges compare to other area cemeteries. Sexton Alderks said that staff periodically surveys area cemeteries to review how we are positioned. He stated that our service fees are in line with other local cemeteries although our lot prices are generally higher. He further stated that when compared to cemeteries that are equal in quality and service levels (e.g., Graceland Cemetery and Rosehill Cemetery in Chicago), our lot prices are comparable. Following a brief discussion, there were no further questions regarding the proposed fees and charges. Commissioner Lopat requested that information be presented to the Commission in upcoming meetings about history of lot/space sales and implications for space availability projections.

A motion was made by Commissioner Dixon to approve the Cemetery Fees and Charges for FY2023, seconded by Commissioner Thornburgh. Motion passed unanimously.

#### **VII. CONSIDERATION OF CEMETERY CAPITAL BUDGET – CHUCK MYERS**

Superintendent Myers presented the FY 2023 Cemetery Capital Budget. He began by pointing out that \$475,000 is being designated for a new cemetery maintenance storage building. This facility will be located behind the gatehouse and replace the current shed which is at capacity. This new facility will be able to house all existing equipment currently stored outside and help clean up the back area of the Cemetery. Chairman Anderson said he has seen the area and discussed current challenges with the staff and agrees that the project is needed for the Cemetery. Anderson said that having this increased storage will reduce deterioration of existing equipment and will aesthetically tie in with the surrounding environment. Anderson noted that the intention for this meeting is to conceptually lay out the need for the facility, approve the initial budget request, yet not discuss the details of this project.

Myers continued with the second item of the Cemetery Capital Budget which is the Memorial Garden Phase II. He said this is estimated to cost \$1.6 million as a carryover from last year's budget. Myers indicated that this estimate is the most accurate number we have for budget purposes but could change when we receive final design and cost estimates early in 2022.

Myers continued with the last item on the Capital Budget: the Small Garden Columbarium. Myers noted that the item has been on the potential project list for a few years and is included as a placeholder to be discussed in the next few years (or it can be deferred).

Myers concluded his presentation with a discussion of the Cemetery ravines. He said that there is no money budgeted for ravine restoration in the budget for next year. Instead, he has

requested that the Cemetery ravines be included in the City's overall ravine management plan so that we are not competing for grant money and resources and will benefit from an economy of scale when working with the City and engineering firms. Myers stated that with the completion of the Sawyer Project, we have addressed the critical issues within our ravine system. Following this year of planning with the City, we will see ravine projects back on the budget agenda in the next year.

Myers explained that once the Commission approves the CIP (Capital Improvement Program), the CIP Budget then goes to City Council for approval. Once Council approves the CIP Budget, staff prepares project specifications to go out to bid. Once bids are received, staff then brings the recommended contractor to the Commission for approval along with the bid and contract amount, which then would then go to City Council for approval of the contract.

Myers indicated that the City of Lake Forest did not receive the EPA grant for the ravines. The coronavirus pandemic and staffing issues have impacted the fluidity on the decision-making process and resulted in the delayed response.

Commissioner Thornburgh motioned to approve the FY2023 Cemetery Capital Improvement Budget. Seconded by Commissioner Dixon. Motion passed unanimously.

#### **VIII. NIEMAN FAMILY MONUMENT REQUEST FOR FINAL APPROVAL – PHIL ALDERKS**

Sexton Alderks presented the Nieman family monument design for final approval. He stated that all members had been able to stop by the Cemetery Gatehouse to review the model of the memorial created by the artists, which was a requirement of the Commission from the last meeting. Chairman Anderson stated that the Commission has the responsibility to review this memorial based on its Rules and Regulations but not as "art critics." Anderson stated that the monument does abide by our rules for size, material, and design.

Following a very favorable reaction from the Commissioners surrounding construction and design Commissioner Wayne made a motion to approve the Nieman family monument which was seconded by Commissioner Dixon. Motion passed unanimously.

#### **IX. OTHER MATTERS**

Chairman Anderson said that Commissioner Lopat has requested an update on the Cemetery's current staffing and operation. Sexton Alderks that there are two full-time maintenance employees, one seasonal employee and one full-time administration employee.

Anderson stated that two items that will be added to upcoming agendas will address Commissioner Lopat's previous requests for information about the projected availability of lots/niches and the cleaning of memorials. The items likely will be included in the January 2022 and April 2022 Cemetery Commission meeting agendas.

#### **X. CITIZENS' OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS CEMETERY COMMISSION**

No citizens present to address Cemetery Commission

#### **XI. NEXT MEETING: WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 26, 2022, at 5:00 PM.**

Chairman Anderson note that the next Cemetery Commission meeting will commence at 5 p.m., Wednesday, January 26, 2022.

#### **XII. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:46 p.m.