

**GREENWOOD CEMETERY ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
FRIDAY, JANUARY 3, 2020 AT 8:30 AM
MUNICIPAL BUILDING, ROOM 205, 151 MARTIN**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Vice-Chairperson Linda Buchanan called the meeting to order at 8:31 AM.

II. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Linda Buchanan, Vice-Chairperson
Kevin Desmond
Linda Peterson
Laura Schreiner
Margaret Suter
George Stern

ABSENT: Darlene Gehringer, Chairperson

ADMINISTRATION: Assistant City Manager Gunter, Acting City Clerk Arft,

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES OF DECEMBER 6, 2019

- Ms. Suter: Page 3, VI A, regarding GPR should read, "Ms. Suter noted that the money budgeted for the GPR is available for use through the end of the fiscal year.
- Mr. Stern:
 1. Page 2, Second Bullet should include "as a consultant" after Ms. Arcome's name.
 2. Under B, fourth bullet correct "brought" with "bought" a system.
 3. In reference to Cemsites, should read "which claims that it is compatible".
 4. Add word "proposed" to list of data fields.
 5. Page 3, Second Bullet should read "Greenwood Cemetery should have its own budget".
- Vice Chair Buchanan: Last page, VIII, clarified her comments to read, "that she researched both private and municipal historical cemeteries (Clerk Offices) to find out if they had any knowledge about management companies. She found that most of the cemeteries in the local area are owned and managed by MMG, Midwest Memorial Group. Ms. Buchanan would like to have additional discussion about what is available to Greenwood, moving forward."

MOTION: Motion by Ms. Suter, seconded by Mr. Desmond:
To accept the meeting minutes of December 6, 2019 as corrected.

VOTE: Ayes, 6
Nays, 0

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Cemetery Database Development – Update

Assistant City Manager Gunter presented to the board the GIS update from the Assistant City Planner. No Action required.

B. MISSION STATEMENT AND CORE VALUES

The Advisory Board was asked to help create a mission statement to guide Greenwood Cemetery’s service and the evaluation thereof. The following are examples of cemetery mission statements:

- We provide the final care for your loved ones, with dignity and kindness. We respect all peoples, our heritage, our communities and the environment.
--Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust, Melbourne, Australia
- It is the mission of the Davis Cemetery District to provide respectful and affordable interment services that meet the cultural, economic, religious and social needs of the community.
--Davis Cemetery and Arboretum, Davis, California

Vice Chair Buchanan offered the following:

- Our mission as members of the GCAB is to advise the City Commission on issues involving Greenwood Historic Cemetery and to advocate that the outcomes of these issues reflect the cemetery’s historical integrity.

Assistant City Manager Gunter pointed out that the Mission Statement would be for the Cemetery as the Advisory Board had already been given a charge from the City Commission.

After considerable discussion, it was the will of the GCAB not to pursue a Mission and Core Value Statement at this time.

C. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Assistant City Manager Gunter presented this item and asked GCAB member Mr. Desmond to lead the discussion based on his expertise in the industry.¹

The Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) would focus on the following areas:

- Customer Service
- Professional Interaction
- Mapping
- Grave Openings
- Physical appearance of the cemetery
- Administrative Work
- Condition of Equipment used for burials and other services

Mr. Desmond expressed that performance results would be best measured by direct feedback from families and funeral directors if that is the will of the advisory board.

Mr. Desmond was excused at 9:44 a.m. He offered to continue the discussion at the next meeting.

Discussions continued among the remaining members of the GCAB; no action was

¹ See attached Addendum for details of the Key Performance Indicator presentation and discussion led by Kevin Desmond.

taken.

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Items under Unfinished Business will be presented as a status update to the Board and may not require action at this time.

VI. FINANCIAL REPORT

Acting City Clerk Arft reported the following:

- There were two burials and one cremation in December
- Inurnment fee of \$750.00 was paid.
- Two graves were purchased.
- Payment for the service was made.
- Invoices for Interment and Inurnment of \$1900 are outstanding.
- Creative Collaboration Invoice of \$3,800 is outstanding for December.

II. OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FOR MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA

No Public Comment

VIII. BOARD COMMENTS

- Vice Chair Buchanan commented that Ms. Arcome has an associate with the same powers to conduct business on behalf of Greenwood Cemetery. Vice Chair Buchanan would like for the associate's name and contact information to be available to the GCAB.
 - Assistant City Manager Gunter will provide the associate's name and contact information to the advisory board.
- Ms. Suter asked about the status of the RFP for the GPR.
 - Assistant City Manager Gunter replied that until the geo-referencing for mapping and coding of the cemetery is complete, the administration is not planning to move forward with the RFP. It is her hope to bring the plot map to the advisory board in February.

IX. ADJOURN

Meeting adjourned at 9:52 am

Next Meeting: February 7, 2020.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

Mr. Kevin Desmond led a discussion based on his perspective of Key Performance Indicators that are useful and measurable in the death care industry.

- Start with confidence that cannot be taken for granted.
- Accurate mapping of the cemetery.
 - Other cemetery professionals find the map at Greenwood confusing and hard to read.
- Correct direction of graves, currently graves are going in opposite directions.
- Identify, map, and stake out correct graves to specific measurement.
 - This step is key and cannot be taken for granted, mistakes are not acceptable regardless of the weather conditions.
- Open graves accurately in a professional, neat, and dignified manner.
- Administer paperwork efficiently after purchases are made and services are performed.
- The key factor that separates or distinguishes service providers is professional customer service.
 - Being available during off hours to meet with people (weekends, holidays, etc.).
- Competent personnel must be available.
 - The patience and guidance necessary to enable people and families to make purchases that best fit their need.
 - Today, many different circumstances, wishes, traditions, and family situations require accommodations.
 - It requires knowledge, patience, and guidance to appropriate decisions that fit the families best both currently and down the road.
 - Being cognizant of future issues while making these types of decisions, not just what is needed now or in the next six months, but long-term considerations depending on the families, their situations, and what is available at the cemetery.
 - Guide families by offering suggestions in a professional manner, just as many other purchase decisions and professional services used in life.
 - Respectful of all ethnic backgrounds, religious traditions, family customs, and being accommodating in a dignified manner.
 - The entire death care industry should work to make an extremely difficult time easier on the families at need.

George Stern asked Mr. Desmond to take the board through the process of what happens when a death occurs and followed with a series of questions.

1. How does the whole process start? Who makes the first call when a death occurs?
 - a. Kevin explained that typically, the next of kin or close family member of the deceased contacts the funeral home when a death occurs. If the death occurs in a healthcare facility, it is often a social worker, nurse, or even the police if the death occurs at home unexpectedly.
 - b. The family gives the direction as to which funeral home is called.
 - c. When persons are in hospice or gravely ill, they are asked for their preferred funeral home in the admittance paperwork.

- d. Once the funeral home is contacted, basic information is asked, but due to the sensitivity, an appointment is set up with the family to discuss the desired service, if pre planning is not in place. It is done typically same day or next day.
 - e. The funeral director meets where it is convenient for the family, at home or the funeral home.
 - f. If the family wants a burial and do not have advanced planning, the funeral director offers suggestions.
2. Mr. Stern asked Mr. Desmond what he says about Greenwood.
 - a. Mr. Desmond said that he does not hesitate to recommend Historic Greenwood Cemetery when appropriate; he also considers the family situation and logistics before recommending any cemetery.
3. Mr. Stern asked if the GCAB should keep funeral homes informed of what services Greenwood provides including cost.
 - a. Mr. Desmond said that the funeral home internally stays current with all the cemeteries in the areas that they commonly work with, with their cost, requirements, policy, and procedures.
4. Mr. Stern asked at what point the funeral director calls the cemetery to talk about needing a plot or using a plot.
 - a. Mr. Desmond expressed that if a family needs to make a purchase that would be done directly with the cemetery independent of the funeral home. If it is just the coordination of the service, or scheduling a burial, that would be done while the family is at the funeral home or right after the appointment is completed.
5. Mr. Stern asked about purchasing a plot, and suggested that a key performance indicator could be how fast Greenwood could finalize a purchase.
 - a. Mr. Desmond presented the following hypothetical, if a death occurs on a Saturday and the family is making plans on a Saturday afternoon and wish to have a burial on Monday, could that be done?
6. Mr. Stern went on to ask, in general, what is the typical time-line. Could it be done in 6 hours or 48 hours?
 - a. Mr. Desmond responded that typically, funeral ceremonies and timing are different. In the past, funerals would take place in 3 or 4 days, not uncommon. Today, it is not unusual, based on a family's needs and circumstances that services are done 1 week to 10 days later. A delay is more common today than 20-30 years ago.
7. Linda Peterson asked about the time line required for Cremations.
 - a. Mr. Desmond expressed that there are additional legal requirements necessary before a cremation can occur; typically, it is done in two to four days. This only pertains to the cremation that happens prior to the service. If the family chooses to have the body present at the service, the cremation would take place after the service. It only takes a couple of days to get the required permit.
 - b. He went on to say that, people are limited to office hours with Midwest Memorial Group cemeteries. If a death occurs Monday at five, a burial on Tuesday would not be possible; and they are closed on Sundays.

8. Laura Schreiner asked if Mr. Desmond was only talking about funeral homes and cemeteries. She noted that religious ceremonies affect the timing of burials.
 - a. Mr. Desmond agreed.
9. Mr. Stern asked if burial site times are fixed. Would pre-inspection of the site be a concern?
 - a. Mr. Desmond expressed, as an industry professional, they trust their service providers to have the site properly prepared at the designated time. He went on to say that the cemetery might require the family to inspect the space beforehand.
10. Mr. Stern asked how tents, chairs, and equipment for lowering the caskets, and accommodation for when the family wishes to fill in the grave is done. He further asked what type of coordination is required with the cemetery.
 - a. Mr. Desmond explained that it starts through discussions with the funeral home and the cemetery and then depends on whether it would be a graveside committal service or a mausoleum chapel service.
11. Mr. Stern asked if that is how it is done at Greenwood.
 - a. Mr. Desmond affirmed and added that tents are often used at Greenwood.
12. Linda Peterson clarified that it is not always the funeral home; it could be the cemetery coordinating the effort.
 - a. Mr. Desmond added that they would take the family's request and pass it along to the cemetery.
13. Linda Peterson said if families could bypass the funeral home, and just go to the cemetery.
 - a. Mr. Desmond said that the work between families and Cheri Arcome would be selecting and purchasing a grave. Setting up and scheduling an actual burial and the different aspects associated with the process is typically done between the funeral director and Cheri.
 - b. Mr. Desmond continued that it is coordinated through phone calls and discussions.
14. Mr. Stern asked Mr. Desmond who orders the vault.
 - a. Mr. Desmond said it would depend on the cemetery, if the vault is ordered through the funeral home, the funeral home would schedule delivery to the cemetery. Cemeteries operate independently, larger cemeteries provide their own equipment, install the vault, provide tent and chairs, and lowering equipment. Currently at Greenwood, Cheri and her company is responsible for opening the grave but it would be the vault company that provides the vault, tent and chairs, and lowering equipment, which was previously done by Elmwood.
15. Assistant city Manager Gunter reiterated that the City's process has not changed. Cheri Arcome, Creative Collaborations, LLC is the liaison between the vault company and the cemetery.
16. Laura Shreiner asked if that practice is more typical in cemeteries the size of Greenwood.
 - a. Mr. Desmond affirmed that the same practices are done at Pine Lake Cemetery, Franklin, cemeteries in Troy, Van Hoosen Jones in Rochester, and municipal cemeteries.

- b. He continued with, previously when Elmwood was managing the cemetery it covered everything required for opening and closing the grave, providing all equipment, vault installation, tent, and chairs. Amongst smaller municipal cemeteries, the practice was more uncommon. The situation now is more typical among Greenwood's peers.
- 17. Laura Schreiner reiterated that it is not the City or cemetery doing it.
- 18. Mr. Stern shared that at Beth El Memorial Park, the cemetery provides all of the services because they are larger and want the money. Vaults are bought wholesale and sold retail. Chairs and tents were bought a long time ago and after the staff digs the graves there is idle time, while waiting for the family, to set up.
- 19. Mr. Stern asked what the staffing expectation at the cemetery is.
 - a. Mr. Desmond said it would be common, due to circumstances and how cemeteries operate, to have a couple of people from the grounds crew that are doing the work.
 - b. He talked about a burial at Greenwood after December 1; Cheri was present with three or four people with her and one person from the vault company to set up tent and chairs.
- 20. Ms. Gunter asked if that happens at every service.
 - a. Mr. Desmond said that is what he saw at that particular service.
- 21. Mr. Stern asked if the funeral home or cemetery directs parking.
 - a. Mr. Desmond said it is the cemetery because they need to maintain clearance for equipment.
- 22. After the funeral what is expected of the cemetery.
 - a. Mr. Desmond said a family might choose to witness the burial or leave before the actual burial occurs. Either way, the cemetery is expected to accommodate whatever the family wishes. They either wait until the family leaves the gravesite to execute the burial, or perform the burial directly after the committal service.
- 23. Mr. Stern asked if there was follow-up; paper work provided to the funeral director after the funeral is over.
 - a. Mr. Desmond replied no.
- 24. Mr. Stern asked would cremation be different?
 - a. Mr. Desmond affirmed that a cremation burial is different and is often dug by hand because of the size of the burial containers for cremations as opposed to a full size casket eliminating the cost of equipment.
- 25. Mr. Stern asked Mr. Desmond did he believe that anything had been missed in considering Key Performance indicators?
 - a. Mr. Desmond replied that he had been very thorough about the process and believes that nothing had been omitted.
- 26. Mr. Stern thanked him.
- 27. Assistant City Manager Gunter asked the following:
 - a. How would the indicators be measured.
 - b. How would the City know if the indicators have been met.

28. Mr. Desmond suggested that the indicators should not be overly specific because each funeral is unique. Outside of direct feedback from families, the best perspective would be feedback from funeral directors.
29. Mr. Desmond offered that the condition of the equipment used is important; presentation should be what people using Greenwood would expect.
30. Margaret Suter expressed that she would not be opposed to a survey, but would not like to receive a survey immediately after a service and she would question the integrity of the company requesting a survey this soon.
31. Laura Schreiner reiterated the uniqueness of each funeral and the emotional level of the survivors. She pointed out transference of emotions could happen and would fall onto the funeral service providers. Therefore, she agreed that a survey would not be appropriate at that time because emotions would skew the feedback.
32. Ms. Buchanan expressed that she highly recommends Desmond based on personal experience. She felt that the level of service is exceptional.
33. Mr. Stern asked Mr. Desmond if he requires that the cemetery provide proof of the decedent having space in the cemetery.
 - a. Mr. Desmond expressed that the cemetery tells the Funeral Director if the decedent has burial rights in the cemetery. Some cemeteries require next of kin sign affidavits attesting to who they say they are. The funeral director is required to arrive with a permit, which is transferred to the cemetery with all of the pertinent information.
34. Mr. Stern asked how it works for actually paying for the opening and closing.
 - a. The family could pay the cemetery directly, or
 - b. Often the family pays the funeral director for service from a third party, and the funeral home pays the cemetery.
35. Mr. Stern asked if the funeral home is not paid by the family, are they legally responsible for the opening, closing, or vault fees.
 - a. Mr. Desmond, relayed that it is just a service that is provided to the family for convenience. The funeral home is not acting as an agent on behalf of the family, and does not assume responsibility for their debt to the cemetery.
36. Mr. Stern asked if there is a time limit for payment.
 - a. There are different policies depending on the service provider for payment. Example, many cemeteries require a check that day and others bill per their policy.
37. Mr. Stern asked what is Greenwood's policy.
 - a. Funeral homes typically require payment before services, Desmond does not and that is more uncommon.
38. Mr. Stern clarified that the payment that he is referring to is between the funeral home and the cemetery/or cemetery service provider.
39. Acting City Clerk Arft replied that back when the City was arranging and performing the burials, payment was received at the burial and sometimes later. There was no policy in place. Payments were made without billing.
40. Assistant City Manager Gunter added that burials are treated as an in and out account. It comes to the City and out to the service provider.