

**Mandan Union Cemetery Advisory Committee
Minutes - Thursday, September 8, 2016
6:30 p.m.**

Advisory Committee:

Sharon Huettl, Chair

Mandy Dendy, Vice Chair

Cindy Scheurer, Citizen

Marsha Boehm, Citizen

Becky Hilfer, Citizen

Mike Braun, City
Commissioner

Jim Neubauer,
Administration

Jeff Wright, Public Works

Chad Boehm, Grounds
Maintenance

Nancy Moser, Secretary

1. Roll Call.

2. Introduction of new employee, Jason Schafer and Commissioner Mike Braun.

Jason Schafer is not present. Jason said he will try to be here later. He was hired as the equipment operator. He is added to the committee.

Chad Boehm is not present. He has been promoted to Grounds Maintenance Superintendent. He is in charge of the cemetery, forestry, and weed control.

City Commissioner Braun is introduced. He now has the cemetery portfolio.

A revised agenda is handed out and adopted.

Becky Hilfer arrives at 6:36 p.m.

3. Approval of the April 21, 2016 minutes.

Commissioner Braun motions to approve the April 21, 2016 minutes. Marsha seconds. Upon vote, motion passes unanimously.

4. Update on perpetual care; Columbarium update; future plans.

Sharon and Mandy found information on perpetual care. The Mandan Union Cemetery, as a municipal cemetery, is exempted from having to operate as a perpetual care cemetery.

Sharon reads part of the North Dakota Administrative Code 33-05-01-04 that says to erect a columbarium there are registration requirements and the plans and specifications must be submitted to the state department of health for inspection and recommendation. Sharon asks Jeff if a proposal has been done to move forward with this.

Jeff gives an update on the columbarium project. There are budget restraints right now that prevent this from going forward right now. To get a columbarium started it will cost \$10,000 to \$12,000. That would provide the start of a columbarium with approximately 144 niches, depending on size. Jeff was hoping to secure Hub City Funding; however, this fund was cut this year. He will look at it again next year. There would be additional expense to add a shelter and concrete.

Cremation burials are discussed. In the past, patrons were advised they could bury up to 6 cremains in a full size space. Nancy has not seen that many in a space. There is the question of how many name plates or flat markers can fit on a full size space. Patrons are also advised 2-3 cremains can be buried on top of a full size burial. Nancy thinks the cremains are buried 3' down. A full size burial is 6' deep. How many should be

allowed per space? The Mandan Union does not require a vault for cremains. It should be researched if there are any laws in regards to a vault and how deep does the burial have to be.

Questions on cremation burials are tabled until there is research on the requirements and it can be discussed with Chad.

Columbarium regulations and requirements should also be researched. This can be tabled for further discussion as well.

5. 2017 flowers – possible donations from merchants.

Sharon suggests asking merchants for flower donations. She asks if there is money for annuals. Jeff says there is the maintenance budget, but that is used on what is a priority first. There are usually people who donate plants and volunteer to plant them in the planters that sit by the main entrance.

Jeff says the forester buys bulk trees from a nursery out of the Valley City area. It is suggested to ask the nursery if they can donate some flowers/plants when the forester makes a bulk purchase.

6. Mission statement.

Sharon, Marsha, Mandy and Becky submitted mission statements for consideration. Mandy's submittal is the favorite.

Mandy motions to approve her submitted mission statement, "Peacefully serving, with dignity and respect, the generations at eternal rest and those who watch over them." Becky seconds. Upon vote, the motion passes unanimously.

The mission statement will be posted on the city's website and in the brochures. Maybe it can be added to the entrance sign or somewhere else on cemetery grounds.

7. Entrance sign. Should it be larger and lowered to the ground for easier viewing/readability?

The entrance sign should be bigger and easier to read. It is too small and sits too high. The black lettering on a green background is hard to read. Jeff says it was less than \$150. If a new one is made, this one can be moved to a different area on the grounds. Sharon suggests a white background with black letters. Maybe 4' x 6'. Commissioner Braun thinks wood posts would look better than the metal pole.

The committee members will review the wording on the sign and will come back to make revisions. Jeff will come back with a couple different examples.

8. Meditation area update; future plan.

See item #9.

9. Update from Chad and Jeff on cemetery; future plans.

Jeff says Chad still plans on painting the arches. More money has been added to the 2017 budget for weed spraying. Hopefully, that will get the dandelions and clover under control.

Mandy says the area where her family is buried has a lot of bare spots. Jeff hopes the weed spraying will help with that so the grass can grow in.

Mandy has some day lilies she could donate. Fall is a good time to plant perennials.

Sharon came out to the cemetery grounds on a Saturday and it was closed. Jeff says there was one day where they sprayed weeds on a Saturday and it was closed probably for a couple hours. Usually, it is done during the week. They use a four-wheeler with a tank.

10. Liability on the public during funerals or any time someone is on the premises.

Sharon asks if there is any liability on the city if somebody gets hurt. Jeff says the city has liability insurance.

11. Insurance on the gravestones, etc. to cover any damage in the event of vandalism, cemetery workers, tree removal/trimming companies, monument workers, etc.

Sharon had seen an article about headstones being vandalized at a cemetery in Dickinson. Is there insurance on headstones? There is no insurance on the headstones. The insurance rates would be a huge cost to the city.

Maybe cameras can be installed at the entrances. Game and fish did install one when a deer was killed with an arrow.

The disclaimer in the rules and regulations will remain: "The Mandan Union Cemetery is not responsible for any items that may be damaged or missing and reserves the right to remove items at any time."

Chad is good at reporting and repairing any damage done to headstones due to ground maintenance.

12. Assisting low income burials along with Morton County Social Services.

A local funeral home has asked if the city can provide a discount or assistance when there are low income burials and funerals.

Nancy provided background information in a memo that was included in the agenda packet. Morton County Social Services assists low income burials when an applicant is approved. Those that apply are more than likely on assistance. The funeral home sometimes ends up eating the remaining expenses. The Mandan Union Cemetery sees an average of two of these per year.

Commissioner Braun does not want the city to get involved in providing assistance. Other board members have the same opinion.

Becky motions to deny providing discounts or assistance for low income burials. Mandy seconds. Upon vote, motion passes unanimously.

13. Thank you Jeff for the explanation in the newspaper of cemetery upkeep to public.

There were some complaints about grass not being mowed. Jeff says the article was not entirely true. He doesn't think it was as long of a time frame as reported. Ground Maintenance had equipment break down. They have found another mower, so hopefully this won't happen next year.

14. Other business.

Marsha's term of 1 year is up on October 1st this year. She would like to be reinstated. Cindy Scheurer has not been to a meeting since last fall. Nancy will ask her if she wants to stay on the board or resign. If she wants to resign, it should be in writing. A public notice will go out asking for letters of interest for serving on the committee.

Jason Schafer arrives at 7:46 p.m.

Sharon asks how the rules are being accepted. Scheduling Monday burials can be sticky. It is difficult at time for the funeral homes to schedule a Monday burial by 10:00 a.m. the Thursday before. Sometimes they don't know until Friday.

Jeff says the rates are being reviewed and may be changed. Fee changes will go to City Commission on October 4th.

Two possible dates for the next meeting: October 5th and October 12th. Commissioner Braun suggests a noon meeting with lunch. Nancy will send a Doodle poll to see what date works best for everybody.

The brochure will have to be updated with new fees and addition of the mission statement. New brochures will be ready for January 2017 when the new fees will go into effect.

Sharon found some revisions that should be made to the brochure:

*Prices effective December 2015.
Monuments must be set on a pad.
& other wording revisions*

Commissioner Braun motions to adjourn. Becky seconds. Upon vote, motion passes. Meeting adjourns at 8:26 p.m.