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Town of Shaftsbury

Municipal Offices at Cole Hall

Meeting Minutes

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Shaftsbury, VT
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Cemetery Committee

Date of Meeting: July 2nd, 2025

Members Present: Kathy Cardiff - Chair, Betsy Habberfield, Abbie Dansereau, Jen Holley - Cemetery Superintendent, Paula Iken – Town Administrator

Committee Members Absent: Rosemary Lindsey, Peggy Wilson

I. Welcome New Member – Abbie Dansereau

Chair Kathy Cardiff called the meeting to order and welcomed new member Abbie Dansereau. Ms. Dansereau clarified her legal name is Labatt Dansereau, though she commonly uses and prefers to be called Abbie Dansereau these days.

II. Budget Report (Added Item) – Paula Iken

After the 1st agenda item was addressed, the Chair adjusted the agenda. Kathy introduced the budget by **Town Administrator Paula Iken** regarding the FY26 Cemetery Operating Budget. Highlights included:

- Total FY26 budget: **\$56,825**.
- Notable cost savings achieved through internal work and negotiated vendor pricing:
 - Cemify Cemetery Software invoice for FY25–26 was **\$1,359**, significantly lower than the original \$20,000 initial estimate. That \$20k was approved by the committee and the select board for the 1st year as that was the estimate to setup Cemify. We did not spend that. Our annual fee for Cemify is \$1,359.00.
 - This reduction was due to Jen Holley's doing all of the plat mapping and raw data database layout work instead of paying the other company to do it.
- The Cemetery Reserve Fund receives an annual **\$5,000 transfer** from the town budget.

- Paula clarified this fund is synonymous with the **Capital Reserve**.
- Transfers are managed by the Town Treasurer during budget setup.

The chair thanked Paula for presenting the Budget, and said she hoped that she would stay for the rest of the meeting.

III. Approval of May 7, 2025 Minutes

The committee reviewed and amended the May 7, 2025 minutes.

- Corrections included:
 - Jen requested a change, that the reference to the town's 250th anniversary should be "**State's 250th anniversary.**" – Change was accepted.
 - The chair, asked Paula, "Who does the minutes" of the meetings. Jen Holley reminded the chair that she does the minutes. This has been discussed pretty much at each meeting, since we lost our secretary. The Town Administrator informed Kathy that each committee decides for themselves who does the minutes. Ultimately, it is up to the Chair and the committee who handles the minutes.
 - Adding clarification that the rules and regulations were reapproved "**as amended and corrected.**" – Change was accepted.

Motion:

To approve the minutes as amended.

Moved: Betsy Habberfield

Seconded: Abbie Dansereau

Vote: All in favor – motion passed. 3-0-0

IV. Housekeeping: Ethics Training & Email Addresses

Ethics Training:

- Members were reminded to complete the state-required **Ethics Training**, due every three years. This is for existing members. New people to town boards and committees have 120 days from appointment to have it completed.
- New members, including Abbie Dansereau, will be provided with login instructions for a special session for the State Ethics training. She can do it online or with the Operations Coordinator by September 25, 2025.

Email Addresses:

- Members are expected to use **town-issued email addresses** for all cemetery business to ensure transparency, protect personal data, and facilitate continuity across membership transitions.
- Paula Iken explained that use of standardized email accounts (e.g., “cem1@shaftsburyvt.gov”) protects both members and the Town in the event of public records requests or litigation.
- Betsy expressed technical concerns with her town email account, which was acknowledged and addressed. She experienced issues on an older device but confirmed she still has access and has worked it out on her end.

V. Purchase of Infant Teal Headstones

Cemetery Superintendent **Jen Holley** presented the committee with the design of the two infant memorial headstones, which was approved at the last committee meeting.

- Online price: **\$249 each** from an Amazon seller.
- Total request: **\$498.00**.
- Stones are 3" thick and more affordable than locally sourced alternatives.

Discussion included:

- Clarification that Vermont statute requires municipalities to furnish headstones when a family does not after a specific length of time (3) years – VT § 5371.
- Jen noted several graves in Shaftsbury cemeteries lack markers; these two would serve as a pilot program to assess quality of this seller and the installation process.
- The committee acknowledged future replacement needs for 40–60 additional gravestones but agreed this was a good starting point.

Consensus: Committee members present supported the purchase and design at the stated cost.

Further discussion about the payment of the replacement stones because of how the law is worded. Kathy brought up the law says the “Town should furnish the stone.” Paula, will look into this. The cemetery budget is an extension of the town budget. Paula will speak to the Select Board and come back to the Committee with an answer

VI. Superintendent's Report

There was a discussion about the Superintendent's Report and the complete report is below.

Burials:

There have been 2 burials since our last meeting.

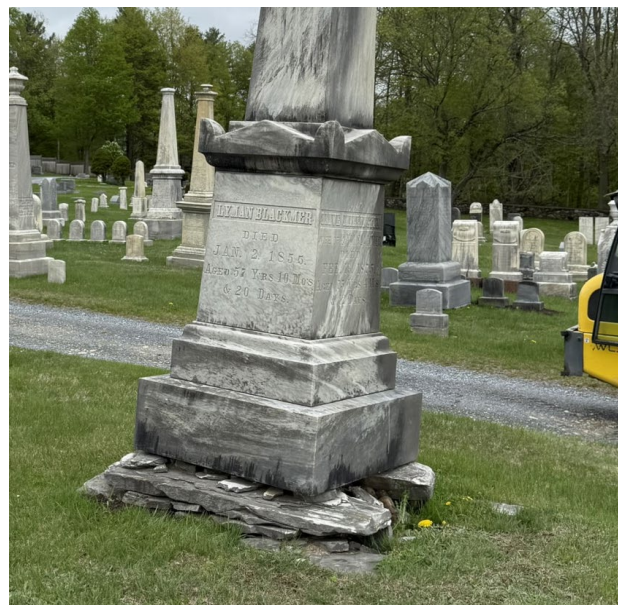
Lot Sales:

I have sold 1 lot in Center since the last meeting.

Gravestone Repairs & Maintenance:

Significant progress has been made in repairing headstones, in Center Cemetery, primarily focusing on Sections D, E, and F. These are the sections that need it the most and we are done with the work to be done there.

There is a monument that is at a concerning lean that will have to be dealt with sooner than later. The monument belongs to Lyman Blackmer (pictured below). It was built in 1855, located Section C, lot 36 A-C. It is on a piled rock foundation. Division II in Grandview is now fully completed, with all stones straightened and numerous needed repairs made. The DPW crew and I dedicated several days of hard work, and the results speak for themselves — it looks fantastic.



4th Sunday Updates:



The 4th Sunday Program met on Sunday, May 25th at 9:00 a.m. at Village Cemetery. We completed the cleaning of all veterans headstones around 11:00am and cleaned a few more and worked until noon.

One down, four to go!

June 22nd we will move on to Center Cemetery. This work session went great.

Cemify Update:

Grandview - Division 2 was sent to Cemify and they uploaded our data. I will now have to go lot by lot and fill in the blanks. And prepare Division 1 for the same..



Historical Society / 250 Celebration Tour:

I added some Laminated Tour Link Maps to Center Cemetery for people to use and leave there. I have them hanging on the Rulebox posts in Section C. I have to come up with a better way to hang them. It is windy in Center.

Here is a Tour Link:

<https://shaftsburyvt.gov/rev-tour.php>

Here is a Tour Map:

<https://shaftsburyvt.gov/2025-tour/Rev-Tour-2025-walking.pdf>

Memorial Garden Update:

There will not be a memorial garden in Center. There is a bench at the parking area – that's it.

Reasons for no Memorial Garden:

1) I planned this garden for the 2 people's remains that were abandoned in one of our cemeteries. They deserved a final resting place. The committee approved this. I planned it, designed it, and bought benches for it. At the last minute the Committee – squashed it. Saying and I quote “This is not a place for remains!” Well it is a Cemetery – So, I disagree.

- During the time when there was No Committee...

2) DPW placed telephone poles at the end of the new turn around to prevent any vehicles from driving on the lots. Therefore, there was room for one bench to be placed in the middle of the two poles. I placed a bench there. I placed the other bench in front of the cemetery replacing the crumbling bench that was a dedication bench to former Superintendent, Fred Stacy.

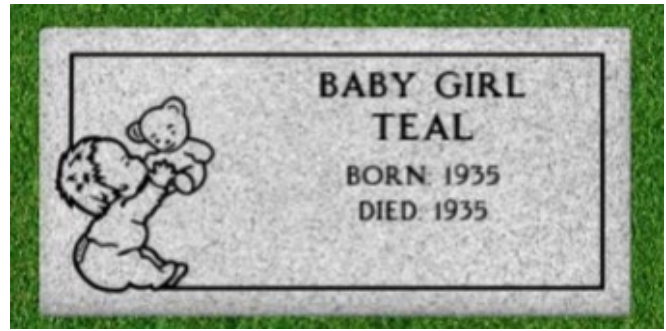
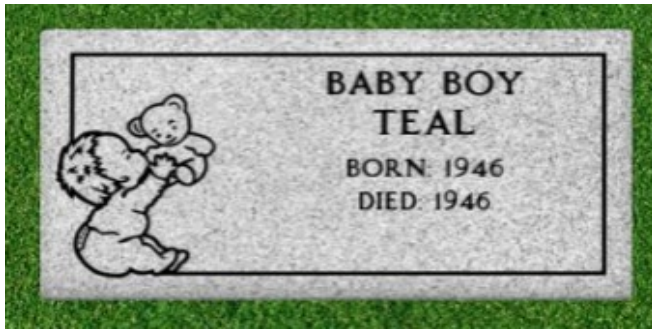


Headstone Updates:

The local quote from Sean Devlin was min. \$750. If I did the installation. Sean sends all of his stone work to John Mahar.

I also spoke to Mark Barber from Shea Monuments, he was around \$800. If I did the installation. The stones would be thicker – 6” vs. 3” but they would also cost a lot more.

I will ask the committee to approve this design before I order. Again, the price is currently \$249. Each. Order total requesting to spend, \$498.00 for both stones.



VII. Other Business

Paula spoke about the committee and how it can change, and work with more active and better communication. Maybe they could do projects that they could handle, like the fencing project at village.

Reappointments & Election of Chair:

- The reappointment process is now handled through the Shaftsbury Selectboard. All current members were reappointed as of July 1, 2025.
- Election of a new Chair was tabled until the next meeting, pending the presence of more members. No nominations were made at this time. The committee felt that more members present for discussion would be better.

Historical Research & Preservation:

- Historical Society member **Carol (Corey)** has been instrumental in compiling records on Revolutionary War veterans buried in Shaftsbury cemeteries.
- Committee members toured several small/private cemeteries and identified three to four Revolutionary War graves. Tabled adding more information from Carol on Revolutionary Soldiers.

Committee Responsibilities & Structure:

- The chair, stated that it is a good time to review the Cemetery Committee's Roles and Responsibilities and the Superintendent's Job Responsibilities.
- The Superintendent noted she has a formal job description which may need updating and would not be attending future meetings unless her presence was specifically requested. The committee will kept up to date on all aspects of the cemeteries by a report every month and can email the Superintendent at any time.

Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn:

Moved: Abbie Dansereau

Seconded: Betsy Habberfield

Vote: All in favor – meeting adjourned at approximately 9:46 AM.