



CLAY STREET CEMETERY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – October 1, 2025
HELD VIA ZOOM WEBINAR AND
IN FAIRBANKS CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
800 CUSHMAN STREET, FAIRBANKS, ALASKA



The Clay Street Cemetery Commission convened at 5:01 p.m. on the above date to conduct a Regular Meeting in the City Council Chambers, 800 Cushman Street, Fairbanks, Alaska, and via teleconference, with **Chair Aldean Kilbourn** presiding and the following Commission members in attendance:

Members Present: Jessica Desmond, Seat B
 Aldean Kilbourn, Seat C (remotely)
 Janet Richardson, Seat D
 Julie Jones, Seat E
 Karen Erickson, Seat F
 Amy Stratman, Seat G
 Jeremiah Cotter, Public Works Director (remotely)

Absent: George Dalton, Seat A

Also Present: Colt Chase, Deputy City Clerk

APPROVAL OF REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

a) Regular Meeting Minutes of September 3, 2025

J. Richardson, seconded by **K. Erickson**, moved to APPROVE the September 3, 2025 minutes.

Chair Kilbourn took a voice vote on the motion to APPROVE the September 3, 2025 minutes and all members voted in favor.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

K. Erickson, seconded by **J. Richardson**, moved to APPROVE the agenda.

Chair Kilbourn took a voice vote on the motion to APPROVE the agenda and all members voted in favor.

CITIZENS COMMENTS – None

COMMUNICATIONS TO COMMISSION

C. Chase shared that a citizen who lives next to the cemetery had recently expressed concern over increasing instances of individuals bringing dogs on the property and not cleaning up. He reported that they had been shown the agenda and were happy to learn that the topic was scheduled for discussion.

EVENTS & PUBLIC RELATIONS

J. Richardson shared details about the recent annual history tour and clean-up project with 7th graders from Barnette Magnet School.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

J. Jones shared that she had placed their next Quiring Monument order, with the goal of spending the rest of their current year's bed tax grant money and getting their account balance back down to the level it was in November 2024. **C. Chase** confirmed that the Quiring invoice for \$6,225 had been submitted and that the remaining balance in their account is \$2,279.89. **J. Jones** stated that she can now complete the annual reporting for their bed tax grant and work on the application for next year's award.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a) Cemetery Rack Card Redesign

J. Desmond reported that she had not yet gotten back to working on the redesign. **J. Jones** asked if she wanted to return the task to the committee or if there was another way they could support her with the project. **J. Desmond** committed to making a concerted effort and would have something submitted for review and input in the near future.

b) Application for Placement – Elida Slaback

Chair Kilbourn noted that they had approved the application for placement at the September meeting. **C. Chase** explained that the item remained on the agenda under Unfinished Business as they were waiting for a response to the letter Chair Kilbourn had sent to the applicant, which included questions regarding logistics of the placement event planned for July 2026, as stated in the original application.

c) Quiring Monuments Order

J. Jones shared that the process of getting a quote and invoice was much smoother this time and that they are just waiting for names to be submitted back to her so she can forward them on. She noted that while the rates of the markers and shipping had not increased, a new crating fee had been added which had resulted in a slightly higher overall cost compared to their last few orders.

Chair Kilbourn reported that they are getting close to having their list of names ready for submission. **J. Richardson** confirmed that they will have a total of 21 names, including Betsy Sharp who was approved for placement at their last meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

a) Discussion on Summer 2026 Groundskeeping Contracting Options

J. Richardson stated that the biggest issue at hand is that the bagging attachment for the lawnmower is not being used, with the only reason provided being that it would take too much extra time to do so. She

described how headstones and crosses across the entire cemetery are constantly being covered in grass clippings and that it takes an incredible amount of volunteer time and energy to clear them off. She added that if it rains after a mow, before they have the chance to clear away clippings, it can be almost impossible to get the markers clean again. **J. Richardson** explained that they would like for the Public Works Department to dedicate someone to maintaining the cemetery grounds next summer and specifically ensure that the bagger is used. She added that if this would not be possible, they would like to explore the option of contracting this work out. She reiterated that they spend a substantial amount of money on buying high quality monuments, along with the dedicating hundreds of volunteer hours each summer, and that it is unfortunate to see things look poor due to grass clippings when a simple solution is readily available.

C. Chase summarized that if Public Works is unable to designate someone for the property, the question at hand is whether the Commission is permitted to pursue contracting out the work and, if so, should a request for funding such a contract be including in their upcoming bed tax grant application, a budgetary request through the Public Works Director, or both.

Chair Kilbourn shared that just 15 kids from the Barnette Magnet School, during their recent history tour and service project, had generated up to 20 full garbage bags of grass clippings in about an hour and a half. She noted that this barely represented one quarter of the entire property. She declared that the way the ground is left after mowing is unacceptable.

J. Richardson stated that the current process of mowing and weed whacking takes up to three days.

J. Jones asked if they would have need to go through the formal Request for Proposal (RFP) steps if they wanted to contract the work. She suggested that an organization like Festival Fairbanks, of which she is the Executive Director, could do the work for much less. She acknowledged that some options would be complicated by insurance and liability issues. She noted that hybrid approaches could also work, with Public Works mowing but a third party coming to haul away grass clippings as well as doing the edging.

J. Cotter confirmed that the scope of work discussed would equate to an added employee. He committed to looking into the reason why current staff was not using the bagger but stated that he would assume it came down to time and their need to finish and move on to other jobs.

C. Chase explained that if a potential contract would be less than a certain dollar amount, a simpler Request for Quote process is permitted under the City's purchasing policy.

Chair Kilbourn asked what the cost would be for a temporary employee through Public Works to perform the work as discussed so that J. Jones could incorporate it into their next bed tax grant application.

J. Jones suggested that if another employee would be added, they could potentially also have them be responsible for the upkeep of the grounds at City Hall, which she believes could really use a lift.

Chair Kilbourn asked if the bagger would not be used that it at least be removed from the shed. **J. Cotter** shared that he had previously asked for this to be done and that he would follow up personally on it.

J. Cotter shared that a temporary laborer would cost the City \$48.27 an hour. **C. Chase** pointed out that an outside contract could be for a flat amount rather than an hourly rate, which might be a cheaper option.

J. Jones asked if J. Cotter would be willing to put in the request for the extra laborer in the 2026 budget or if they should do so in their bed tax grant application. **J. Cotter** stated that they are already going to be requesting an increase for summer temporary labor. **C. Chase** pointed out that the timing for both approaches overlaps and thus it might be wise to request the funds through both avenues. **J. Jones** concurred that she would include it in their application.

Chair Kilbourn asked if they could specifically include within the application a plan that Festival Fairbanks would take care of the contracted work. **J. Jones** agreed. **C. Chase** noted that it could be as simple as modifying the existing contract between the City and Festival Fairbanks. **J. Jones** stated that she would speak with the City's Chief Financial Officer to confirm the best way to go about the idea. **J. Cotter** reiterated that they should be certain on any parameters for liability insurance.

J. Jones stated that she would check in with J. Cotter in a few days to discuss the options and make sure that they have a clear proposal to include with the grant application.

b) Signage Need: "No Animals Allowed"

J. Richardson reported seeing several people bring their dogs to the cemetery, sometimes running free without any leash, and that owners have even allowed their dogs to urinate on headstones. She explained that the "No Animals Allowed" sign that used to be on the 7th Avenue gate had been leaning up against the shed for some time.

Chair Kilbourn requested that several signs be made and placed at multiple locations around the property.

C. Chase recommended that the signs instead state "No Pets Allowed", citing requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

J. Cotter confirmed that Public Works could take care of this request.

OPEN AGENDA – None

NEXT MEETING DATE – November 5, 2025

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Kilbourn, seconded by **K. Erickson**, moved to ADJOURN the meeting.

Chair Kilbourn declared the meeting ADJOURNED at 5:36 p.m.


Aldean Kilbourn, Chair


Colt Chase, CMC, Deputy City Clerk

Transcribed by: CC