



CLAY STREET CEMETERY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – June 4, 2025
HELD VIA ZOOM WEBINAR AND
IN FAIRBANKS CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
800 CUSHMAN STREET, FAIRBANKS, ALASKA



The Clay Street Cemetery Commission convened at 5:02 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: George Dalton, Seat A (left at 5:22 p.m.)
Aldean Kilbourn, Seat C
Janet Richardson, Seat D
Karen Erickson, Seat F (joined at 5:09 p.m.)
Amy Stratman, Seat G

Absent: Jessica Desmond, Seat B
Julie Jones, Seat E
Jeremiah Cotter, Public Works Director

Also Present: Colt Chase, Deputy City Clerk

APPROVAL OF REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

a) Regular Meeting Minutes of May 7, 2025

J. Richardson, seconded by **G. Dalton**, moved to APPROVE the May 7, 2025 minutes.

Chair Kilbourn called for any objection on the motion to APPROVE the May 7, 2025 minutes and, hearing none, so ORDERED.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

G. Dalton, seconded by **J. Richardson**, moved to APPROVE the agenda.

Chair Kilbourn called for any objection on the motion to APPROVE the agenda and, hearing none, so ORDERED.

CITIZENS COMMENTS - None

COMMUNICATIONS TO COMMISSION – None

EVENTS & PUBLIC RELATIONS

Chair Kilbourn shared that she had spoken with Dusty Spencer who confirmed that he and a large crew of workers were planning to come out on Thursday, June 12 from 9:00 a.m. and would stay as long as needed. She expressed appreciation for the Mayor showing up at the annual clean-up event. She reported that a local group of Masons also came out for the event for the first time ever and brought their children.

J. Richardson confirmed that it was a younger crowd of Masons and that they had committed to come out more often to help maintain their organization's dedicated area of the cemetery. She noted that the group did in fact come back the following Thursday to do more work.

Chair Kilbourn stated that a local Scout group had placed wreaths and flags prior to Memorial Day. She reported that they have not yet been retrieved but that she and other workers had stacked and set them aside for pickup and that she had left a message with the local Scout office.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Chair Kilbourn referenced the provided financial report. She discussed the possibility of seeking quotes for groundskeeping services to ensure the property is maintained throughout the summer in the event that the Public Works Department is unable to keep up with their needs. She shared details about the various tasks she and J. Richardson had undertaken recently to rake grass clippers and use a trimmer to edge the entire cemetery. She acknowledged that a single laborer from Public Works would not be able to keep the property in order throughout the season.

J. Richardson confirmed that they had just spent the entire day dealing with the grass clippings and edging but that the grass would grow back to the same height within a week.

A. Stratman recounted that the late Frank Turney would visit the cemetery every day during the summer to personally put time into mowing but that they as Commission members could not commit to the same.

C. Chase stated he would reach out to Public Works Director Jeremiah Cotter to convey their questions.

C. Chase provided a follow up on the question raised in the May meeting about whether an invoice from Quiring Monuments had been paid twice in the previous year. He noted that the two lines in the financial report with almost identical amounts for payments to Quiring were in fact two separate orders. He shared that the invoices respectively referenced "Summer" vs. "Fall" orders and just happened to include the same number of units, with only a \$100 difference in shipping.

Chair Kilbourn confirmed that, with no outstanding expenses, the current balance of their account is \$8,678.10. She discussed the need to purchase more tubes of adhesive/sealant, especially with the large group of helpers coming on June 12 and indicated that she would purchase these materials. She reported that they will not need to purchase any more pea gravel as the donated material from Public Works was doing well. She acknowledged that this was a welcome savings for the year.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a) Quiring Monuments Orders

Chair Kilbourn confirmed that all three orders from Quiring that were intended for installation this summer were at the cemetery. She stated that J. Richardson will be going through them during their next major workday to confirm there are no inscription errors. She discussed how they will utilize their group of helpers to work through the three sets of markers. She estimated that they would likely have one list of names ready to submit in September for their next order.

b) Elks Plot Information

Chair Kilbourn reported that there was no update for this item.

c) Maintenance & Repair of Cemetery Gate

Chair Kilbourn indicated that the primary issues with the gate had still not been resolved but that a new lock had been installed. **J. Richardson** provided additional details on the current status of the gate. **C. Chase** shared that he had provided J. Cotter with contact information for the National Association of Women in Construction per the invitation from J. Desmond and that he is waiting to hear back from them.

d) Cemetery "Tourist" Rack Card

Chair Kilbourn noted that this was a project being undertaken by J. Desmond, who was absent and thus no update was available. **C. Chase** confirmed that he had compiled and forward J. Desmond a list of feedback from the Commission members who had responded to her initial drafts and request for input.

e) Additional White Cross Placements/Replacements

J. Richardson confirmed that this project was still underway and that a couple more units had been added to their list after being damaged by moose and the mower.

NEW BUSINESS

a) Placement of the Vachon Information Board

C. Chase displayed imaged that had been sent via email on the meeting room projector screen. **Chair Kilbourn** discussed the placement of the Vachon Information Board, suggesting that it would be best to trim the pole to allow the sign to be lower to the ground and closer to the monument. **J. Richardson** pointed out that this option would also be more ideal for mowing considerations. **A. Stratman** asked if it was going to be lower to the ground, should they angle the board slightly upwards. She confirmed the need to accommodate the mower. **Chair Kilbourn** explained that the sign is larger than it appears in the photos and that even with a lower placement it would be easy to read without angling it upward. **J. Richardson** added that the mounting bracket attaching the board to the pole was not adjustable. **Chair Kilbourn** suggested A. Stratman take a look the next time she is at the cemetery.

b) Cemetery Grounds Maintenance

Chair Kilbourn stated that it was unfortunate J. Cotter was not present to discuss some of their concerns pertaining to grounds maintenance. **C. Chase** suggested that they share their thoughts regardless, which would be summarized within the meeting minutes, and that he could reach out to J. Cotter to convey any specific items needing to be addressed sooner.

Chair Kilbourn began by asking why the bagging attachment is never used when the cemetery is mowed, citing the space it takes up in their shed. She discussed the considerable amount of time spent by volunteers raking up grass clippings. Photos to illustrate the problem were shared on the meeting screen. **J. Richardson** pointed out that the clippings settle around gravesite markers which leads to sedimentation

and contributes to sinking. **C. Chase** asked whether or not grass had been bagged in previous years. **Chair Kilbourn** clarified that it has not been since Public Works began taking care of the grass but that in years prior, the late Frank Turney would mow with just a personal push mower, bagging all clippings as he went. **J. Richardson** noted that she also has to go around with a leaf blower to clear the debris from markers. **Chair Kilbourn** added that the clippings, once wet, stain the markers green, leaving them looking messy, and making inscriptions harder to read.

Chair Kilbourn discussed the need to apply “weed and feed” to help keep the grass healthy and combat the massive dandelion problem. **J. Richardson** pointed out that bagging grass clippings would help reduce the spread of dandelion seeds. **K. Erickson** noted the several types of grass throughout the property.

J. Richardson discussed the problem with carpenter ants that has been going on for years, noting that they had made a major return. She expressed concern that they will eventually eat away the insides of the nearby spruce trees and cause them to fall over. She recounted that Facility Laborer Alex Lexa, from Public Works, had sprayed chemicals for this same problem two years prior.

Chair Kilbourn discussed the frustration with the delay in getting Golden Heart Utilizes to turn the water back on at the property, citing a recent conversation that implied services may not be restored until potentially the middle of the following week. She suggested that this should automatically be scheduled every year, to be turned on before June 1. She detailed the challenge of hauling water from home to use on the flower planters across the cemetery.

C. Chase confirmed that he would summarize and convey their comments to J. Cotter.

OPEN AGENDA

K. Erickson asked what ways interested individuals could know how to contact the Commission members if they are seeking details about family members potentially buried at Clay Street Cemetery. **J. Richardson** gave details about the information available on the kiosk at the cemetery. **Chair Kilbourn** discussed how Explore Fairbanks has made details available. **C. Chase** noted that all roads (of inquiry) lead interested individuals to the City’s website, which has links to the online database Find-a-Grave, as well as a way for them to contact the Commission directly via email.

C. Chase confirmed that applications for reappointment had been received for those Commission members whose terms were set to expire in the near future.


NEXT MEETING DATE – July 2, 2025

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Kilbourn declared the meeting ADJOURNED at 5:45 p.m.



Aldean Kilbourn, Chair



Colt Chase, Deputy City Clerk

Transcribed by: CC