

**Church of St. Paul – Comfrey
Cemetery Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, October 20, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. – Church Social Room**

Members present: Fr. Steffl, Doug Callanan, Richard Callanan, Kurt Eischen, Jean Kopischke, Robert Zwaschka, Stan Schotzko, Judy Augustin, Denice Evers, Nellie Richter-Secretary

Meeting opened at 6:00 p.m. with Fr. Steffl leading group in prayer.

Additions to the Agenda: Lawn Pro and Snow Removal.

Meeting Minutes from July 22 & July 27, 2020 Meetings were presented. M/S/C R. Callanan, Zwaschka to approve as read.

R. Callanan stated that Travis Braulick with Bankers Life Annuity couldn't be here tonight due to another meeting. He gave a review of the Financial Report of the Bankers Life Annuity for the Perpetual Care. It shows that a 3 percent Bonus of \$6,300 was credited right away to the account. The Index Credit will always vary every year.

On September 28, 2020, an Annuity from Bankers Life was purchased in the amount of \$210,000. At the one-year anniversary, the Ending Account Value of the Annuity was \$225,818.66, showing a total of \$9,518.66 of interest added. Richard asked how much of the interest should be transferred to the Operating Fund? Fr. Steffl felt that it can be taken out now or left in. Doug mentioned that the statue will need some repairs due to deterioration, and the trees and shrubs by it will need to be trimmed or removed, so expenses will be more than usual. The checking account and SouthPoint savings (as of 9/30/21) totaled \$44,819.70, so there would be enough in Operating Fund account without the Annuity interest. M/S/C Eischen, Doug Callanan to leave the interest in Bankers Life Annuity.

Doug said that the statue/trees and sign area need more than trimming. Replacing some trees and shrubs shouldn't be extremely expensive. Evers asked if the shrub by the sign was removed? Doug said it was trimmed so should be okay. The shrubs and bushes camouflage the watering tank. Statue needs refurbishing as the bushes and shrubs are encroaching on the statue and excessive trimming will just leave more branches. Concerns of rocks being thrown if a chipper is used for the stumps. Fr. Steffl asked if anyone had an estimate? Would need to check with Doug Brown or Ryan Tree Service on removing the shrubs and then can contact Redwood Falls Nursery and ask for planting recommendations for that area.

Extra charge of \$50 per cremation burial – is this necessary? Doug said that the By-Laws allowed family members to dig an urn hole if they wanted. (No vault is required for a cremation.) Richard added that how the \$50 extra came to be was that Cemetery Committee members dug the holes for the urn, but then some had a vault, which added more time to do. Fr. Steffl said that St. Mary's charges \$50 to dig an urn hole. Does the cemetery need equipment to open graves in winter? Doug said that grave heaters would be equipment to be considered down the road if we would do the digging for cremation burials. Fr. Steffl said that cremations could wait until spring for burial. However, some families insist on having the burial on the day of funeral. Randy Sturm usually does the digging for regular and cremation burials now. Cemetery Committee decided to eliminate the extra \$50 charge for cremations. Doug and Nellie will look into the wording of this for our By-Laws.

Future cremations: Do we need them to be handled through the local funeral home? Fr. Steffl said with COVID, issues with needing to get the ashes buried & proper documentation all need to be considered.

Doug mentioned that we had one in the past without a funeral home involved and there were many loose ends left at both church and cemetery. Cremation Society doesn't do what Sturm Funeral Home does. Kopischke offered that maybe we need to have a written contract with the family that lists expectations of what has to be done, cleaned up, etc. if they aren't going to go through a funeral home. Eischen asked Fr. Steffl if priests get paid when there isn't a funeral director involved and he answered sometimes.

Doug also brought up that with a cremation, if no vault company is involved, then there is no tent out at the cemetery. Can be awkward if inclement weather for burial. Since regular burials are required to have a vault, then a tent is put up for those. Doug had several phone contacts for funeral tents, etc.

Cemetery Directory: Doug mentioned that he found several, and the simpler the better. Evers will go with whatever Doug comes up with. Pictures of one in a Nicollet Cemetery were passed around – Doug felt it was sturdy and well-built, but he hasn't located the manufacturer yet. Three-ring binder with names and map of cemetery is really all that would be needed for the directory to contain (no need for death date and other info). Could possibly remove it in winter. Evers is willing to pay for this.

Maintenance of lots/needed repairs on cement, etc.: Richard credited Brian Callanan for his mowing and trimming of the cemetery and keeping everything in good repair. He also does an exceptional job with necessary repairs of stones. Doug mentioned that Richard also does work in the cemetery that helps with the upkeep.

Snow removal in Cemetery: Would Kurt and Matt Eischen continue to do snow removal when it is necessary for a burial? Kurt said they would. If fee established for doing so, then they would need to carry special insurance (independent contractor). Maybe if donation received by family for snow removal then that can be given to Eischen's? May need to hire larger equipment if snowdrifts would really be high, etc.

Richard reported that when the lot rates were increasing, and people given a few months to decide, 16 lots were sold. Doug asked if more couples were buying just one lot, and we had a few. His concern is for ordering a Memorial stone, as there is a size restriction with only one lot.

Lawn Pro: Discounted charge for 2022 services would be \$754.35. Richard is satisfied with their work and how the grass looks. M/S/C R. Callanan, Zwaschka to approve paying this bill for next year.

Doug thanked all for attending.

Fr. Steffl led the group in a closing prayer.

Meeting adjourned at 7:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Nellie Richter