CITY OF PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE
COMMITTEE FOR CEMETERIES

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2026, 4 pm
City Hall Conference Room A
1 Junkins Avenue, Portsmouth NH
For the Zoom recording: https://youtu.be/Co-r5yhF8No

MINUTES

1. **Call to order and Roll Call**
   Dee Dee Forte, chair; Peter Splaine, Sue Polidura, Karyn DeNicola, Jennifer Merriam, Michael Griffin, Steve Buzzell, Tara Rix, Amy Dutton. Excused: Celeste Brooks, Bridget Brady. Staff: Corin Hallowell, Stephanie Seacord

2. **Minutes for August 6, 2026** – approved unanimously on a motion by Splaine seconded by Polidura.

3. **Point of Graves Wall Update** – Hallowell reported that DPW Project Manager Sproviero anticipated the completion of the surveying this week. Next step will be to put the project out to bid. In September the donation of funds will go to the City Council for approval. A project page for the Point of Graves, including a link to the design drawings is now added to the Point of Graves historic cemetery page: https://www.portsmouthnh.gov/city/point-graves Note: At the end of the meeting Buzzell suggested a Point of Graves headstone cleaning day for September 26, 9 am to 12 noon, to which Friends of the South End as well as sailors from the USS New Mexico will be invited.

4. **Rack card 2026 edition** – Seacord is anticipating comments from Brooks and will contact her in order to revise the draft.

5. **250th Revolutionary War gravesite markers, tour, signage**
   - Gravesites are marked. Seacord will work with Jamie McCarthy on a GPS map to enable a self-guided tour.
   - Signage at the cemeteries has been designed but not yet produced.
   - The Committee agreed that fall foliage visitors and Portsmouth Historical Society tours will continue to generate interest, so the tour and signage are still needed. After discussion the Committee agreed the markers should stay up, if in good condition, through the placement of wreaths in December – which will further highlight their locations.
   - Seacord will report on website visit analytics at the October meeting.

6. **Broken Thomas Ayers Neal headstone in North Cemetery** – Forte and Polidura met with the descendant and discussed approaches for replacing the stone as the

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broken-off piece was not among the fragments collected in the holding tomb.

7. **Headstone of Capt. Joseph White** (d. 1728), located on his former property that is now a private residence. Forte and Polidura met with the new (2023) owners. They are contemplating the installation of a swimming pool but are willing to see that the burial and headstone are properly preserved. They have agreed to a ground penetrating radar survey, which Polidura can arrange with the new City-serving archaeologist Jessica X who has availability in late September or October. Relocation might be to Harmony Grove where White's daughter and granddaughters are buried adjacent to the Spinney plots as the families are connected.

8**. Other Business** –

- Pleasant Street Cemetery – Wendell Tomb – Still seeking a mason to estimate the cost of the project. Dutton has a potential contact and will connect with Forte.
- Buzzell reported he also found in the crypt two GAR markers, one from the Lafayette Post #140 in Harlem NY and the other from Post 1 in Decatur IL. Topic on what to do with the markers was tabled until the October meeting.
- Buzzell also found a marker with Hebrew lettering which he took to Temple Israel. They will determine the location, potentially their cemetery on Banfield Road. Buzzell also 'reconnected' a fragment of marble with the Sheafes buried at St. John's. The Committee agreed it is rewarding to connect the pieces.
- Hallowell is able to provide Buzzell with a DPW tent so he can continue working as weather deteriorates.
- Dutton plans to meet Buzzell on Sep 11 at Cotton Cemetery for more headstone cleaning and Committee members are invited to join them.
- Polidura plans to offer a history walking tour of North Cemetery for the Committee. Will determine a weekday 4 pm date and advise.

9. Public comment – None.

10. **Adjourned** at 4:42 pm on a motion by Splaine seconded by Merriam.

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