

**CITY OF PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE
COMMITTEE FOR CEMETERIES**



**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2026, 4 pm
City Hall Conference Room A
1 Junkins Avenue, Portsmouth NH**

For the Zoom recording:

<https://youtu.be/QDqN06vBbXM?si=l0oxnhkpIDy8sHsF>

MINUTES

Call to order and Roll Call

Dee Dee Forte, chair; Peter Splaine, Sue Polidura, Celeste Brooks, Bridget Brady, Jennifer Merriam, Michael Griffin, Steve Buzzell, Amy Dutton, Karyn DeNicola.
Excused: Tara Rix. Staff: Corin Hallowell

1. Approval September 3, 2026 minutes – on a motion by Splaine, seconded by Polidura the committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes.
2. Point of Graves wall -- \$1,600 in individual donations were accepted by City Council at their meeting on Sep 28. An anonymous FOSE donor has given \$240,000. Hallowell reported that an RFP is being put together now, with hope of starting construction in early spring. Dutton asked if masons were still needed. Hallowell replied they will be able to respond to the RFP. Discussion about the Wendell tomb followed – a mason is needed there and Griffin recommended that the tomb be inspected for water damage before work is done on the walls.
3. Chair Forte shared copies of the new Revolutionary veterans gravesites rack card and reported Seacord has distributed 100 of them to the Portsmouth Historical Society. Additional copies are available from Seacord.
4. Portsmouth Historical Society tours -- North Cemetery Thurs at 4, Sat at 2. Point of Graves, Thurs & Sat at 4pm
5. Rev war soldiers walking tour – the QR code on the new rack card links to a Google Map identifying each gravesite from the GPS coordinated provided. Committee discussed how to determine the coordinates – from Find A Grave (where coordinates can also be added) and from cellphone GPS. Buzzell asked if someone could provide a short tutorial at the next meeting.

Dutton asked whether the markers could be left in place over the winter now that the identifications have been made. Committee agreed, and to replace or repair any that deteriorate. Committee then discussed finding a permanent metal replacement like the other veterans' flag holders, over the winter. Committee will research and discuss at the next meeting.

6. Captain Joseph White grave on Spinney – Polidura said there was no update. Still waiting until the archaeologist has time available to do the ground penetrating radar survey. The next steps will be determined after that survey.
7. Other business
 - a. Hallowell brought forward the idea of hiring an intern (college archaeology or history major who would work for the credit, or, if not, paid) to work with the Cemetery Committee. Needs include:
 - i. Defining and marking the sections of each cemetery. Splaine suggested the Haverhill MA Linwood Cemetery grid as a model. Dutton said a landscaping-type survey would help set grids. Hallowell said the grids may be obvious from satellite imagery.
 - ii. Recording the location and information on each headstone in those sections in a comprehensive database that could be accessed through the City website
 - iii. Field work assisting Buzzell in cleaning, repair and assisting DPW in clearing brush, etc. With the goal of balancing the two assignments to make the job more interesting.
 - b. Polidura discussed repairs on four Civil War headstones (two from 13th NH Regiment; two burials and two memorials) at the back of North Cemetery, close to the water. She straightened one but reported the ground is very loose and the stone is likely to tip again.
 - c. Polidura, Griffin, Buzzell and DiNicola reported no success so far in their research on Edith Watson (d. 1992). She is not listed in the Rochester 2005 index.
8. Public comment – None.
9. On a motion by Splaine, seconded by Polidura, the committee voted unanimously to adjourn at 4:44 pm.

Next meeting: Thursday, November 5, 2026 at 4 pm.