

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



THURSDAY, AUGUST 6, 2026, 4 pm

City Hall Conference Room A

1 Junkins Avenue, Portsmouth NH

For the Zoom recording:

<https://www.youtube.com/live/8Umqpcvo6Qk?si=W6wi9Gqpmvqe-oN6>

MINUTES

1. Call to order and Roll Call
Dee Dee Forte, chair; Peter Splaine, Celeste Brooks, Sue Polidura, Karyn DeNicola, Bridget Brady, Steve Buzzell, Tara Rix, Amy Dutton. Excused: Jennifer Merriam, Michael Griffin. Staff: Corin Hallowell, Stephanie Seacord
2. Approved unanimously, June 4, 2026 meeting minutes as amended (remove duplicate "Griffin") on a motion by Splaine seconded by Polidura.
3. Point of Graves Wall Update – DPW Project Manager Christine Sproviero reviewed the 90% plans with the Committee. The project is currently being surveyed to define the footprint limits and the property lines where the wall and fence delineate the cemetery. The City expects the survey to be completed by the end of August. The plan now eliminates the two extra pedestrian access points as the connecting walkway would require some unwanted excavation. The design is intended to look like stacked stone (including dark mortar) and granite stone caps. Perforated drainage under the wall will help direct any water to the City drainage system. In September the donation of funds will go to the City Council for approval. The City is hoping to complete the bidding process this fall. Once construction starts an archaeologist will be onsite, as required by the State.
4. Pleasant Street Cemetery – Wendell Tomb – Corin Hallowell brought this item to the Committee's attention to keep it on the radar for repair when funding is available after the Point of Graves project. Chair Forte said she will contact the mason to start the estimating process. Forte also mentioned the Union/North Cemetery wrought iron work for which the City has received \$10,000 from a Union Cemetery abutter.
5. Rack card 2026 edition – Stephanie Seacord presented another draft and reported she will work on the design of the names on the front and share a digital file with the Committee. The rack card will not go to print until approved and after the current supply is depleted.
6. Woodbury Langdon plaque – Dee Forte reported she has not heard from the family or DAR/SAR about a dedication ceremony but she will ask them again.
7. 250th Revolutionary War gravesite markers, website, tour
 - 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.

- Seacord presented a draft press release based on Polidura's article prepared for the City newsletter. Committee members suggested adding the website address for the list of gravesites (a QR code is included on the signage) and the website for the historic cemeteries. On a motion by Polidura seconded by Briggs, the committee voted to approve the press release with edits and to send it to Monte Bohanan for approval, distribution and an excerpt for the newsletter.

8. Other business –

- North Cemetery fenceline update – Hallowell reported that the City continues to work with the abutter on defining the property line as it is also part of the North Mill Pond/Maplewood outfall drainage project.
- Broken Thomas Ayers Neal headstone in North Cemetery – Forte is meeting with a descendant on August 11. Buzzell and Hallowell will determine if the broken-off piece is among the fragments collected in the holding tomb.
- Polidura reported her research on the lone headstone of Capt. Joseph White (d. 1728) on his former property that is now a private residence. The Committee discussed next steps including possible GPR to see if there is evidence of other gravesites. Polidura will discuss further with the property owner whether they are interested in having any remains exhumed and relocated with the stones to Harmony Grove where White's daughter and granddaughters are buried.

9. Public comment – None.

10. Adjourned at 4:54 pm.

After considering rescheduling, the Committee agreed to keep the next meeting as: Thursday, September 3, 2026 at 4 pm.