

CITY OF PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE
COMMITTEE FOR CEMETERIES



THURSDAY, JUNE 5, 2025

MINUTES

For the Zoom recording, go to:
<https://youtu.be/R0YBMH44CXU>

1. Call to Order and Roll Call: Dee-dee Forte, chair; Celeste Brooks, Peter Splaine, Sue Polidura, Steve Buzzell. Staff: Corin Hallowell, Stephanie Seacord (recording secretary).
Absent: Michael Griffin, Duncan McCallum.
2. Approval of the Minutes of the May 1, 2025 Cemetery Committee Meeting on a motion by Celeste Brooks, seconded by Sue Polidura.
3. Grave rubbings request update – Dee met with inquirer Betty Jo Henley who explained the guide and materials (wax and paper) she planned to use. Gave permission and met her onsite at Point of Graves. Observed that she was very careful. Committee affirms that it will allow grave rubbings on a case by case basis, on request.
4. Service with Liberty update – Postponed to May 16 due to weather on May 9. Completed rail painting in North and 85% of Union. Dee will inquire if they could return to complete the project in 2026.
5. Headstone straightening update – Steve has completed straightening in Hall and partial North. (Celeste planned to join him June 6 for additional work in North). Steve asked Corin for additional gravel and a wheelbarrow. Storage for materials TBD. Corin confirmed with Steve that the Apox cement was working effectively on granite and marble (with 24 clamped set-up, not 6 hours). Steve used it to repair the Whipple daughter stone broken in three pieces. Corin asked for assistance with a broken granite pillar in the Veterans Memorial at Plains Field. Proposed to work the morning of June 6.
6. Dinah Chase Whipple event update – plans in place for Friday, June 13 at 1 pm. Dee will check with Richardson's Memorial on Monday, June 8 if the stone had not yet arrived. Event publicized in City Newsletter and social media.
7. Point of Graves wall update – Corin met with DPW Director Peter Rice to discuss repair or replacement which will require inclusion in the CIP. Corin requested Committee assistance with the historical research to determine what the wall originally looked like for consideration in replacement. In the meantime the broken wall area was cleaned and concrete barriers placed to prevent any other damage. Dee volunteered to do research at Portsmouth Athenaeum and Sue at the Library.
8. Point of Graves headstone cleaning – Dee would like to schedule, inquired if Friends of the South End would like to assist again.
9. Other Business –

1. Create a cleaning schedule? Peter offered availability on Saturdays. Celeste suggested Friday evenings in the summer when there is light. Steve still has D2, spray bottles and brushes. Corin offered to replenish supplies as needed.
2. African Burying Ground Memorial – Corin reported the tile repair is complete and crew is working on refinishing the figures. Letters in the granite are repainted and stone replaced in the driveway. In good shape for Juneteenth when the Black Heritage Trail is planning to highlight the maintenance work.

10. Public Comment – None.

11. Adjourned at 4:28 pm. Next meeting July 10, 2025 at 4pm.

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/TpjEBbQgSMSqBO7qdOhESA>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.



CEMETERY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes
May 1, 2025 at 4:00 p.m.
Conference Room A
Portsmouth City Hall
1 Junkins Avenue, Portsmouth, NH

Members Present: Co-Chair Dee Forte (Forte); Steve Buzzell (Buzzell); Michael Griffin (Griffin); Peter Splaine (Splaine); and Sue Polidura (Polidura)

Members Present via Zoom: Celeste Brooks (Brooks)

Staff Present: Suzanne Woodland, Deputy City Manager/Regulatory Counsel

Members Absent: Duncan MacCallum (MacCallum)(excused)

Public Attendees: None

1. **Call to Order and Roll Call:** Meeting called to order at 4:00 p.m. and roll call of the members was taken and as noted above.
2. **Minutes: Motion** by Splaine to approve the minutes of April 3, 2025 Cemetery Committee minutes. Griffin seconded the motion. All in favor, the motion was approved.
3. **Request to Conduct Grave Rubbings:** The Committee discussed the request of Betty-Jo Henley of North Conway, NH to conduct grave rubbings. There was general interest in recommending the request subject to more information and oversight. **Motion** by Polidura to have Forte follow up with the requester with additional questions. Griffin seconded. All in favor, the motion was approved.
4. **Update on Headstone Straightening:** Buzzell gave an update on headstone straightening and described the City's acquisition of equipment to assist that process.
5. **Other Business:**

Forte reminded the Committee of the Serve with Liberty day of Service later in May.

Polidura discussed the upcoming 250th anniversary of the Battle of Bunker Hill and identified the Portsmouth residents who served and are buried here.

6. **Public Comment:** None.
7. **Adjournment:** **Motion** by Griffin to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Buzzell. All in favor, the motion was approved. Meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 5, 2025 at 4:00 p.m. in Conference Room A.

Draft Minutes prepared by:
Suzanne M. Woodland

Minutes Approved: June 5, 2025