



**Town of Whitingham
Cemetery Commission**

MINUTES OF May 7, 2026

These Minutes will be accepted into the public record (with any corrections noted) at a future meeting of the Whitingham Cemetery Commission.

Attendees: Brad Lackey, Madeline Klein, & Katherine MacLean

Brad called meeting to order at 6:21 p.m.

Brad made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from August 27, 2025; motion seconded by Madeline.

Brad made a motion to vote in Katherine MacLean as Secretary; seconded by Madeline.

Madeline made a motion to vote in Brad Lackey as Chair; seconded by Katherine.

Additions/Deletions: None.

Gravestone Repairs

Brad reported that we completed repairs of 7 gravestones in Sadawga Cemetery in 2025 at a cost of \$2,440.

Brad and Madeline discussed the planned repair of 6 more gravestones by Mark Spiller and 3 gravestones by Doug Dix (Deerfield Valley Maintenance) for 2026.

Brad reported that an individual had offered to pay for the repair of his family headstones in Cutting Cemetery. Brad will check with this individual to move forward with the repairs.

Brad reported that we spent \$2268.75 on Spring cleanup, leaving about \$3000 for Fall cleanup plus repairs.

Cemetery Signage

Brad reported that he ordered one of the signs (Coleman Cemetery) that the commission had chosen last year, and he said that they are hard fiberglass and similar to the ones in Wilmington. He reported that 18 inches seems to be a sufficient width.

Madeline reported that she would coordinate with the town Treasurer to order the remaining signs from Amazon at a cost of about \$44 per sign, with a goal to have them up in time for Old Home Week.

Brad and Madeline discussed different types of posts for the cemetery signs. Steel posts (1.5") would cost about \$50 per post for Joe Saladino and crew to place. Fence posts may not be sturdy enough to ensure the signs stay where they are placed for a long time. Madeline will ask Stanley if the town may be able to place the steel posts instead.

Green Cemetery Tree Cutting and Improvements

Brad reported that based on the lowest bid received last year (\$40,000), we will need to receive 3 written bids followed by a selectboard approval in order to move forward with the tree removal at Green Cemetery. Brad offered to write a proposal and send out to the 2 contractors he had previously received bids from. Madeline noted that an announcement can also be placed in Town Hall and in newspaper.

Brad received an email from Matt Betit about finishing the area he had brush hogged last year next to Green Cemetery. The total cost of removing the larger stumps, flattening out the roots and regrading the surface would be \$6300. Based on this estimate, we will need 2 verbal quotes to move forward. Madeline noted that it may be best to get a second written quote so that we can more easily document and compare the two bids.

Review of Old Administrative Business

The family headstone for Joyce Dix still needs to be placed back in the correct location. Brad has contacted Doug Dix about making a new base and moving the headstone, and he will contact him again to get this moving.

Brad informed the commission about the benefits of using the NEMRC Town Cemetery indexing system. The upfront costs could potentially be offset by grants. Katherine offered to ask the Cemetery Commissioner in Halifax, Laurel Copeland, if she is aware of any grants to support the conversion to digital indexing.

New Administrative Business

Brad shared that Linda Cardone had asked if natural (green) burials are allowed in town cemeteries. Brad suggested that we could survey and designate a portion of the Sadawga Cemetery for natural burials. Katherine shared information about green burial sites in neighboring town cemeteries (Brattleboro, Guildford, Marlboro, Halifax), and noted the change in the law that requires burial to 3.5 feet for natural burials (compared to the traditional 6 feet). The commission decided to research and discuss this matter further.

Madeline reported that there are saplings beginning to come up in front of the burning bush shrubs at Jacksonville Cemetery. She would like this to be addressed, as some town residents have complained about how it looks. She also suggested that we could arrange a town clean-up day for the cemeteries.

Brad reported that we will need to itemize and post a new mowing contract this Fall, because Deerfield Valley Maintenance will not continue doing this work.

Katherine had received a request, via the Town Clerk, from the LaRochelle family about placing a headstone at a gravesite in their family plot in Green Cemetery. Katherine asked about how graves are marked and the cost. Brad reported that grave marking costs \$30 and a cremation burial costs \$50. Brad informed Katherine that the town does not organize full burials or the placing of headstones, and that a family would have to hire a funeral director or other professional for that work. Brad will check with Joe Saladino about the family gravesite in question and Katherine will respond to the family with information and a plan for moving forward.

Katherine made a motion to adjourn at 7:55 p.m., Madeline seconded. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Brad Lackey, Madeline Klein & Katherine MacLean