

Town of Vassalboro

Cemetery Committee Policy

Enacting Provisions

The Vassalboro Cemetery Committee is established under the appointing authority of and accountable to the Town of Vassalboro Select Board. It shall function in accordance with its stated purpose and all local ordinances, policies, and State statutes, including but not limited to Maine Title 13, §1101 (Maintenance & Repairs; Municipality).

Composition

The committee shall consist of five members of which the Select Board shall appoint at a Select Board meeting every July for a one-year term.

The Committee shall elect from within its members a Chair.

Purpose and Goals of the Committee

The Cemetery Committee shall assist the Town in fulfilling its statutory obligations to preserve and maintain ancient and veteran burying grounds located within Vassalboro. The Committee plays an important role in ensuring the respectful care and preservation of the Town's historic cemeteries.

The Committee's responsibilities within ancient burial grounds include:

- 1.) Advisement on general maintenance such as grass trimming, weeding, clearing brush, and determining pruning/removing small trees
- 2.) Advisement on tree removal or maintenance
- 3.) Assisting with light headstone cleaning and repairs using appropriate preservation methods in accordance with best practices
- 4.) Facilitate placement of flags for veteran headstones including those within local burial grounds of other associations
- 5.) Maintaining an inventory of all known ancient cemeteries in the Town, including location and other relevant information
- 6.) Supporting fundraising efforts to supplement Town resources for cemetery restoration and preservation
- 7.) Providing recommendations to the Select Board on priority repair or restoration projects

8.) Assist with planning, budgeting and coordination with contractors for larger maintenance projects when authorized

9.) Advising on the use of the interest money from the Perpetual Cemetery Interest Fund

10.) Providing the town staff with help when using the online cemetery record keeping software

11.) Providing information on the history of the various cemeteries and the people buried in the cemeteries

The Select Board may direct and delegate tasks to the Cemetery Committee at the Boards discretion, in so far as, it is related to goals associated to the purpose of the committee.

General Provisions

The Committee shall hold a meeting to fulfill its duties of electing a Chairperson.

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The Committee shall hold all meetings open to the public and ensure adequate notification is published in accordance with all applicable State laws. All committees are required to provide agendas to be posted on the website and live stream their meetings using only Town equipment and the Towns official online platform.

The Cemetery Committee may hold field visits or workdays to carry out cemetery-related tasks. The Cemetery Committee shall also serve in an advisory capacity, offering recommendations to the Select Board. The Committee shall provide annual reports to the Select Board through the Town Manager summarizing accomplishments, conditions of known burial grounds, and any recommended improvements. A staff liaison may be appointed by the Town Manager to support the Committee's work, at the Town Manager's discretion. The Committee does not hold authority over other municipal officials or departments and reports directly to the Town Manager and Select Board.

On matters pertaining to delegated tasks, special projects and/or review of strategic plans, the Committee shall provide to the Select Board through the Town Manager their recommendations in writing, which will be subject to final approval of the Board. The Select Board retains the authority to accept, modify, or request alternative recommendations as needed to ensure fiscal responsibility and serve the best interests of the community.

When possible the cemetery committee will provide town staff with assistance with questions about cemetery issues, as well as provide assistance with using the town's online cemetery software.

All records created and/or obtained by the Committee are under ownership of the Town of Vassalboro and must be submitted to the Town Manager's office for records retention and requirements of the Freedom of Access Act (FOAA).

Committee members are encouraged to work together in a spirit of teamwork, with a shared focus on open communication, transparency, and constructive problem-solving. Members should support initiatives that contribute to thoughtful, long-term solutions for the benefit of Vassalboro.

The Committee shall adhere to all requirements of the town's Ordinances, Town policies, Personnel Handbook and applicable laws governing municipal operations.

Town Responsibility

- 1.) The town staff will be responsible for the basic functions of selling lots in town cemeteries that still have room for new burials.
- 2.) The town will provide to each member of the cemetery committee town email addresses so that town cemetery communications via email are easily accessible to the public if requested.
- 3.) For the time being aspects of the role of a traditional sexton for cemeteries will be provided in part by the cemetery committee and the town manager.
- 4.) The town will provide to the cemetery committee with accounting of the Cemetery Perpetual fund Interest account.

Budget Line

Funding is pending Town appropriation for each fiscal year. Pending appropriations, funding availability to the committee will be under the budget line identified as Expense 01-14 is established to be used as necessary for purchasing of supplies and general maintenance. Request for expenditure shall be in writing and is subject to the approval of Town Manager prior to any obligation of funds on the Towns behalf and the Town's Procurement Policy.

Funding requests in excess of the authorizing power of the Town Manager/ Select Board will be subject to appropriation by Town Meeting.

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All funds collected through fundraising, donations, or revenue-generating events and programming shall be handled exclusively by an individual appointed by the Town Manager. This individual shall be properly bonded and deputized to collect funds on behalf of the Town.

November 14, 2025

Rick Denico Jr., Chair

Chris French, Selectboard member

Mike Poulin, Selectboard member