www.shaftsburyvt.gov

Town of Shaftsbury
Municipal Offices at Cole Hall

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Meeting Minutes

Cemetery Committee

Date of Meeting: May 7th, 2025

Members Present: Jennifer Holley, Superintendent, Kathy Cardiff - Chair, Rosemary Lindsey, Betsy Habberfield, Peggy Wilson - Neal Strong - (absent)

I. Introduction: Abbie Dansereau

- Abbie Dansereau was introduced as a potential new member of the Cemetery Committee. She is also an active member of the Shaftsbury Historical Society.
- Abbie provided a brief personal and genealogical background:
    - Originally from Danby, Vermont.
    - Interested in genealogy for over 30 years.
    - Moved to Shaftsbury in 2004.
    - Involved in the Historical Society since approx. 2016–2017.
    - Has familial ties to Shaftsbury through the Madison and Bulch families, among others.
- The committee discussed the appointment process. While previously informal, Naomi Miller, Select Board Chair - recently discovered the formal process requires the Select Board to interview prospective committee members, which now apply to Abby.
- Abby agreed to remain through the meeting to see how the meetings are.

II. Approval of November 6, 2024 Minutes

- Motion to approve the minutes was made and seconded. Vote: 4-0-0

- Vote: All in favor. Minutes approved.

III. SHS Collaboration for 250th Anniversary – Jen

- Jen recapped her collaboration with the Shaftsbury Historical Society for the Vermont State's 250th Anniversary:
    - At the request of Carol (Corey), Jen designed a historical cemetery walking tour highlighting Revolutionary War veterans.
    - Jen completed the project within two 12-hour days due to a short turnaround time.
    - The project included an interactive map integrated into Cemify and hosted on the town's website.
    - The map is scannable and linked to individual veterans' information. The Tour also has Find-a-Grave links and Cemify Links on the Web Tour. Hard copy versions will also be made available for visitors at Cole Hall. If people wish to take the Tour.
    - Carol has requested one additional veteran be added to the tour. Jen Holley will do so, when the information is sent.
    - Jen emphasized the map is designed for continued public use and is adaptable for future tours (e.g., Civil War-focused or Waite Cemetery-specific).
    - Committee members praised the accessibility of the printed and digital resources.

IV. Superintendent's Report

Burials:

There have been 14 burials since our last meeting in November of 2024.
4 in Center, 5 in in Grandview, 1 in Maple Hill, 3 in Village, 1 in Waite.

Lot Sales:

I have sold 5 graves since our last meeting. 1 in Maple Hill – 1 cremation grave in Grandview, and 3 graves in Center Cemetery.

Revenue Breakdown:

Donations	$210.00
Burial Fees	$1,400.00
Lot Sales	$5,100.00
Total:	$6,710.00

Gravestone Repairs & Maintenance:

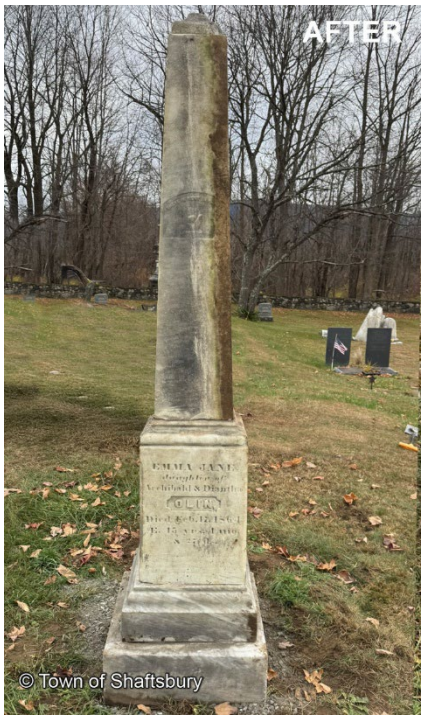
Significant progress has been made in repairing headstones, thanks to the dedicated efforts of the DPW crew and myself. In November of last year, we spent three full days working in Center Cemetery, primarily focusing on Sections D, E, and F. We straightened and repaired numerous headstones - so many that it became difficult to keep an exact count.

After each work session, I devoted considerable time to meticulously editing and organizing photographs to document our efforts. However, the volume of work completed resulted in hundreds of photos, and managing before-and-after comparisons for each repair quickly became overwhelming. While I continue to prioritize updating Cemify with current images, especially when stones are cleaned or restored, maintaining a detailed photographic log of every fix is no longer feasible. I appreciate your understanding and apologize for not being able to keep up with this aspect of the documentation. However, I do have some examples below of the amazing work we did and Mike Yannotti has given me permission to run another crew this week. We are at it again!


BEFORE
© Town of Shaftsbury


AFTER
SIMEON MARTIN
BORN
OCT. 28, 1798,
DIED
DEC. 14, 1872.
POLLY,
WIFE OF
SIMEON MARTIN,
BORN
FEB. 7, 1800,
DIED
JUNE 5, 1866.
© Town of Shaftsbury


BEFORE
© Town of Shaftsbury


AFTER
© Town of Shaftsbury

4th Sunday Updates:



The 4th Sunday Program officially began its season on April 27th. Although the weather was damp, the moisture actually aided our efforts in removing lichen from the headstones, making the conditions quite favorable. We had our best turnout to date, with six participants, including two new volunteers. We extend a warm welcome to Sarah Costin and Priscilla Sachs - both of whom expressed enthusiasm for the work, and we hope to see them return for future events. All volunteers received a new logo T-Shirt to wear to the work events. Our next work session is scheduled for Sunday, May 25th at 9:00 a.m. at Village Cemetery. This gathering will mark the completion of our work in that location, as we anticipate finishing the cleaning, repair, and straightening of every remaining Veteran's headstone. We encourage anyone interested in participating to join us for this meaningful effort. We will then move on to Center Cemetery in June.

Cemify Update:

I have completed the initial raw data entry for Division 2 and submitted it to Cemify for upload. At this stage, the information is very much in its preliminary form - what I refer to as "raw data." Once it is loaded into the system, I will begin the process of reviewing and refining each lot individually.

As we all know, Grandview Cemetery presents its own unique set of challenges; it truly is a storybook in itself. With so much missing or incomplete information, my goal is simply to do the best I can - and that means improving what we have, step by step.

If I happen to be out of the office for a few days this summer, chances are you'll find me in Grandview, reading and recording headstones in an ongoing effort to enter accurate records into Cemify.

Historical Society / 250 Celebration Tour:

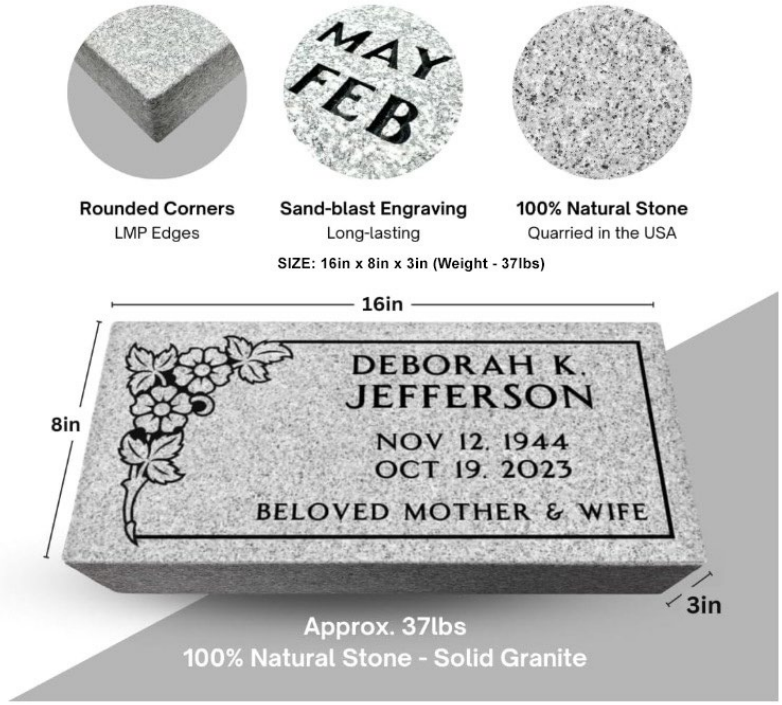
I was asked to develop a web-based tour highlighting the Revolutionary War soldiers buried in Center Cemetery and to link it with Cemify. Carol Dziubek (Corey) provided the textual content to me and I created the Tour with the content she provided, combining coding and Cemify. I designed the tour to serve multiple purposes: it supports the Historical Society's event on May 3rd, but it can also be used independently. Additionally, the Town can feature the tour on our website and make printed copies available at Cole Hall for visitors who wish to explore it at their convenience. I made it in a way that people do not actually need a handheld device to do the tour. They can just walk it using the map and view the headstones.

➡ Here is a Tour Link: https://shaftsburyvt.gov/rev-tour.php

➡ Here is a Tour Map: https://shaftsburyvt.gov/2025-tour/Rev-Tour-2025-walking.pdf

Headstone Replacements:

I have not completed a list of stones that need replacements. However, there are many. Instead, I would like the committee to consider committing to replacing 1 or 2 stones a year with at least affordable flat granite stones. We can get some estimates before deciding on how many to commit to replacing. Only placing first, last, birth year, and death year on the stone. That's it. The flowers and outline – sure it is not an extra cost for that in the below example.



I found this on Amazon as an example of what we could get as an "Affordable Replacement" stone. It costs $249.00 with free shipping – If you have Prime.

I could do the foundations for the cost of the cement.

V. 2025 Spring Cemetery Walk-throughs

- Proposal to resume spring walk-throughs, not done since 2023.
- Concerns raised about tick exposure and wet weather conditions in the Private cemetery visited in 2023.
- Committee agreed to begin with Village Cemetery.
- Walk-through scheduled for Friday, May 30, 2025 at 9:00 AM, weather permitting. We will be meeting at Cole Hall.
- Additional cemeteries to be scheduled as time and conditions allow.

VI. Other Business

1. Memorial Garden at Center Cemetery

- Jen showed the layout creation of a memorial garden at the turnaround in Center Cemetery that was approved by the committee last year.
    - Includes a flowering tree, two decorative cement benches (already purchased for $25 total), and a small commemorative sign ("Shaftsbury Memorial Garden").
    - DPW will assist by grading.
    - Jen Holley will do the planting, and setting bench foundations with help from DPW.
    - Purpose: A quiet space for reflection; not for internment of remains.
- Motion to approve establishment of memorial garden passed unanimously.

2. Discussion on Disposition of Unclaimed Cremains

- Two urns found at Grandview Mausoleum are currently stored in the attic at Cole Hall.
- Discussion of options:
    - Not appropriate to scatter in memorial garden.
    - Possible to inter in Maple Hill Cemetery or another suitable location.
- We will place the remains in a grave at Maple Hill Cemetery in a grave the superintendent feels would be a good spot near the gate by the road.

3. Approval of Headstone Replacements

The town needs to install and replace headstones for damaged or never installed headstones, per Vermont law. A discussion was held about this. Over time when Cemify is fully completed we will have a better idea of how many we will have to do and this will be a long time project. In the meantime, we can start small and just replace one or two a year. Jen suggested two infant graves in Village, since Village is completed in Cemify. It was voted and Approved unanimously to purchased 2 stones for these infants. Jen will also get a local quote vs. the online quote provided to the committee. The Vermont Law is below.

§ 5371. Town or city to furnish headstone

In case of the burial of a person not having known estate, and not having a suitable marker or headstone erected at the person's grave within three years after the date of such burial, the selectboard of the town or the aldermen of a city, as the case may be, where such person is buried, shall cause to be erected at such person's grave, at the expense of such town or city, a suitable marker or headstone with the inscription thereon of the name of the deceased and dates of the deceased's birth and death, if the same are known. (Amended 2023, No. 6, § 175, eff. July 1, 2023.)

4. Cemify Update

- Jen reported that deeds are now automatically generated within Cemify upon entering sales.
- This streamlines work for both Jen and Marlene.

5. Request to Remove Remains

- Jen received a request from a family to exhume cremated remains of a mother to reunite with her late husband.
    - Jen denied the request per cemetery rules prohibiting disinterment.
    - Advised family to seek a court order through Probate Court if they wish to pursue further.
    - There is room for the father to be buried with the mother at Center Cemetery.

6. Rules and Regulations – Final Revisions

- Jen requested reconsideration of language removed during her absence from the November meeting.
- Key revisions:

    - Addition of clause: “Placement of all cemetery memorials and headstones must be approved by the cemetery superintendent.”
    - Removal of redundant clause about vertical monuments.
- Motion made and passed to re-approve the rules and regulations as corrected and amended bring the edited rules to the Select Board again.

Donations:

- Committee affirmed that all cemetery donations should be made to the Town of Shaftsbury and given to Paula Iken, Town Administrator, with a note in the memo field designating the cemetery project or item.

Adjournment:

- Motion to adjourn was made and seconded.
- Meeting adjourned at approximately 10:05 AM.
- Next Meeting: Wednesday, June 4, 2025