

HILL WEST CEMETERY ASSOCIATION
Annual Report to the 2020 Montgomery Annual Town Meeting

Hill West Cemetery, located above West Hill Brook on West Hill Road, appears to date from about 1870, for the earliest date on a gravestone in the cemetery is 1871. It is located on town land, which was roughly doubled in size by a donation by Peter Watson in 1978. The current size of the cemetery is about 30,000 square feet, or about two-thirds of an acre.

As plot-holders refurbished the cemetery from the dereliction into which it had fallen by mid-century, the Hill West Cemetery Association was established to administer the cemetery on behalf of the town, and the Association has ably administered the cemetery since that time. It holds an annual meeting each June, and the agendas and minutes of all meetings are posted on the town bulletin boards and website in accordance with the Open Meeting Law. In 2016 and 2017 the Association reviewed and revised its Bylaws and Rules, approving them at a Special Meeting in September 2017.


The 2019 Annual Association Meeting was held on June 19 in the Montgomery Town Library in the Public Service Building. Meeting in this public space instead of in a member's home emphasized the Association's accountability to the Town of Montgomery on behalf of which it administers the cemetery. About 15 people attended, including a number of people who had not previously attended Association meetings.

Approved were the 2017 minutes, the President's report and the Treasurer's report. Elected were: Vice President, Earl Lumbra; Clerk, Treasurer, Nancy Lumbra; and Trustees: Wayne Jewett, Gary Jewett, Earl Lumbra, Michael Jewett, Nancy Lumbra and Titus L. Presler. (President Jeff Jewett and Clerk Titus Presler continued in their two-year terms.)

The major discussion concerned the proposed consolidation of town cemetery administrative bodies into one commission. Selectboard Chair Charlie Hancock was present to explain that the Selectboard was concerned only to comply with state statutes, which the Selectboard understood to require a single cemetery commission. He emphasized that the Board had no criticisms of the Association or its administration of the cemetery.

Discussion was vigorous. Members stressed that no change was needed if it appeared there were no administrative problems to solve. Some noted that town administration prior to mid-century had allowed the cemetery to become derelict. It was noted that Title 18, Chapter 121, provisions 5362, 5373, 5375, and 5379 of the Vermont Statutes do not necessarily require that all town cemeteries be under a single commission and that they do not exclude the possibility of the Selectboard making separate provision for a particular cemetery to be administered differently under its oversight. Charlie Hancock stated that the Selectboard would continue to study the matter and planned at some point to convene members of the various cemetery administrations for a discussion.

As at past meetings, the consensus of the meeting was to oppose consolidation. The meeting expressed gratitude to Selectboard Chair Charlie Hancock for attending the meeting, clarifying the Selectboard's concern and listening to the Association members' views.



Titus L. Presler
Clerk