

Center Cemetery Commission Meeting Minutes

Thursday, August 6, 2026

7:00 PM

Public Safety Building Conference Room

View Recording:

<https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLJ4Zj87UKieM&si=P7FWe9iBJC2eBVup>

In Attendance*: Cindy Gilchrist, Jade Kelly Dixson-Boles, and Jen Wirth

Visitors: Lois Lumbra, Tim Murphy, Jeffry Jewett, Titus Presler, Kathryn King, Howard King, Chris Dixson-Boles, and Titus Presler

**Meeting Register attached*

Cindy called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

1. **Review and make any changes to the agenda** – no changes.

2. Review and approve notes from 2 July 2026 meeting. Jade Kelly made a motion to approve the notes, seconded by Jen. Approved 3-0.

3. **Possibilities for Expansion** (Jade Kelly)

The Selectboard has given approval for further investigation into expansion. There is town-owned land both to the right and to the left of the current cemetery that could be used for cemetery expansion. The Cemetery Commission would need to create a proposal for expansion and submit it to the Selectboard for approval. Jade Kelly made a motion to proceed with creating a proposal to expand the Center cemetery. Seconded by Cindy. Approved 3-0.

4. **Grounds / maintenance**

- Schedule walk-through to identify broken monuments and other needed repairs / perpetual care responsibilities

Cindy proposed that the commissioners schedule a walk-through. Walkthrough scheduled for 9AM on the August 28th.

5. **State of Center Cemetery Records**

Cindy has spent several hours going over the cemetery records. Jade Kelly said she had spoken to Nancy, and that the electronic records were in an Excel file on a computer in the town office. The town clerk is looking for the file. Jade Kelly will follow

up with to see if she has found it. Cindy pointed out that there are 3 different numbering systems in the cemetery files. There are areas that were originally walkways between sections that were later filled in. In order to sell plots, the commissioners need to be clear on what the numbering system is, and which plots are available.

6. Green Burial (Jen)

- State law requirements for burials (e.g. vaults, markers)

Jen gave an update on green burial requirements. The State of Vermont recognizes natural burial grounds. Commissions need to create bylaws to determine what is allowed in their cemetery, constrained by what is allowed by state law. Hill West Cemetery allows green burial throughout their cemetery. Jade Kelly asked if they had any issues or concerns with their green burials. The only issue they found was that the dirt needed to be mounded up more initially to allow for settling, then leveled the next year.

Cindy made a motion to explore establishing an area for green burial. Seconded by Jade Kelly. Approved 3-0.

Allowing green burial may require changes to Cemetery bylaws and Rules. Cindy will draft new bylaws and rules, for review at the next meeting.

The next cemetery commission meeting will be Thursday September 3, at 7PM.

7. Discuss Cemetery Commission merger(s) (Cindy)

Lois expressed support for merging the Center and Village cemetery commissions. Hill West Cemetery Association is not interested in consolidating the West Hill Cemetery association with the two Montgomery Commissions. Their structure is different and is working well for the cemetery and the people who own plots (association members).

Merging the Village and Center cemetery commissions would mean that both commissions would be dissolved, and new Commissioners elected at town meeting. In addition, some of the cemetery funds may be designated specifically to be used for the Village Cemetery or the Center Cemetery. The treasurer would have to determine which funds are specifically designated to a specific cemetery, and create budget line items to reflect that.

The Village cemetery has different plot sizes and costs. Merging would require there to be a consolidated set of bylaws and rules that apply to both cemeteries. Lois will call a meeting of the Village Cemetery Commission to decide whether they wish to proceed with the merger.

Jade Kelly made a motion to agree to merging with the Village cemetery commission. Cindy seconded. Approved 3-0.

Next Steps:

- Village Cemetery Commission to vote on whether to proceed with merger
- If approved by both commissions:
 - Write article language (with assistance from Liz Reighley and/or Selectboard) for 2027 Town Meeting Warning to dissolve Center & Village Cemetery Commissions and create one 5-member board to oversee both cemeteries
 - Request Treasurer to create separate line items in budget where necessary to apply funds to specific cemeteries

8. Review, update, and add action items

Date-#	Action	Responsible	Deadline	Status
0702-01	Sign oath of Office	New commissioners: Jen Wirth, Annie Purrier, Ryland Purrier	6 Aug 2026	Jen completed. No updates from Annie or Ryland
0702-02	Follow up with Jeff Lawyer re: installation of corner markers that have been purchased	Annie Purrier		No Update
0702-03	Contact Selectboard to determine next steps for Center Cemetery expansion	Jade Kelly Dixson-Boles	6 Aug 2026	Complete. See details above.
0702-04	Contact Nancy Lumbra to learn what's been done to computerized Center Cemetery records and how to maintain the system & records going forward	Jade Kelly Dixson-Boles, Cindy Gilchrist		In progress. Jade will follow up with Liz to locate the computerized records
0702-05	Research state laws regarding green burials and report findings to Center Cemetery Commission	Jen Wirth		Complete. See attached report.
0702-06	Open dialogue with Charlie Hancock (or select board designee) and Lois Lumbra regarding process for combining Center and Village Cemetery Commissions	Cindy Gilchrist	6 Aug 2026	Complete. See details above.

Date-#	Action	Responsible	Deadline	Status
0806-01	Draft new rules & bylaws	Cindy Gilchrist	3 Sep 2026	

Jade Kelly made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Cindy. Meeting was adjourned 3-0 at 7:55 PM.

Center Cemetery Commission

Meeting Register

Meeting Date: 6 Aug 2026
 Time: 7:00 PM

- ◆ Please print your name in the first column and initial the second.
- ◆ If you are a visitor to this meeting, write "V" in the third column.
- ◆ If you want to receive a copy of the meeting notes, please provide your email address and write "Y" in the last column.

#	Name (Please Print)	Initials	Role (C or V)*	Email address (optional)	Notes? (Y/N)
1	Cindy Gilchrist	CG	C	cindy.gilx@gmail.com	Y
2	Jade Kelly Dixson-Boles	JKB	C	Jade@dixson-boles.com	Y
3	Jen Wirth		C	jengramps@gmail.com	Y
4	Annie Purrier		C		
5	Ryland Purrier		C		
6	Lois Lumbr	LL		loislumbr@icloud.com	Y
7	Tim Murphy	TM		murphy.c@tlink.net	Y
8	Kathryn King	M			
9	Howard King	L			
10	Jeffrey R. Jewett JR			jeff.chas@hotmail.com	Y
11	Chris Dixson-Boles			chris@dixson-boles.com	Y

#	Name (Please Print)	Initials	Role (C or V)*	Email address (optional)	Notes? (Y/N)
12	Titus Presler	TP	V	tituspresler4@gmail.com	Y
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Montgomery Center Cemetery Commission – Green Burial

The purpose is to evaluate the feasibility of establishing a Green Burial Section within the Montgomery Center Village Cemetery. This is not intended to replace traditional burials, but rather to provide families with another meaningful option that reflects changing preferences while honoring the traditions already established within the cemetery.

1. The Cemetery Commission has the authority to establish green burial

Under **18 V.S.A. § 5378**, the Cemetery Commission may adopt bylaws and regulations regarding the permanent disposition of the dead, if they are consistent with Vermont law. Those regulations must be recorded with the town clerk. This gives the commission authority to establish a green burial section through local rules rather than requiring new state legislation.

Examples of regulations could include:

- No embalming (except when required by law)
- Biodegradable caskets or burial shrouds only
- No concrete vaults or grave liners
- Native plantings instead of elaborate landscaping
- Flat natural markers or GPS-based grave mapping
- Restrictions on artificial flowers and decorations

2. Vermont law specifically recognizes natural burial grounds

Vermont has a statute devoted to natural burial grounds (18 V.S.A. § 5323).

Natural burial grounds are exempt from several traditional cemetery requirements, including:

- Standard cemetery plating requirements, allowing GPS or survey mapping instead.
- Mandatory perimeter fencing provided the boundaries are clearly marked in a less intrusive way.
- Certain monument requirements, if your regulations don't require traditional grave markers.
- Some construction restrictions to preserve the natural character of the burial area.

Vermont law already recognizes Natural Burial Grounds.

3. You do not have to require vaults

Vermont law does **not** require burial vaults.

Most green cemeteries prohibit:

- concrete vaults
- metal caskets
- treated hardwood caskets

Instead they allow:

- pine caskets
- willow caskets
- cardboard caskets
- bamboo caskets
- linen or cotton shrouds

4. Embalming is not required

There is no Vermont law requiring embalming simply because someone is being buried.

In fact, most green burials involve:

- no embalming
- refrigeration if needed before burial
- prompt burial after death

The funeral director simply follows the normal death certificate and burial permit process.

5. Burial permits are still required

Green burials follow the same legal paperwork as conventional burials.

That includes:

- death certificate
- burial-transit permit
- cemetery records

Only the burial practices differ.

6. Record keeping is especially important

Because green burial areas often have fewer visible monuments, Vermont specifically allows nontraditional methods of identifying graves, including:

- GPS coordinates
- survey monuments
- GIS mapping
- detailed cemetery maps

Next steps:

- ☐ Vote to explore establishing a Green Burial Section.
- ☐ Select an appropriate area for the Green Burials.
- ☐ Develop written Green Burial Rules and Regulations.
- ☐ Consult your local funeral homes so they understand the new option.
- ☐ Have the Commission adopt the regulations.
- ☐ Record the regulations with the Town Clerk.
- ☐ Update the cemetery map.
- ☐ Create educational materials explaining what green burial is and what it is not.

Each year, 22,500 cemeteries across the United States bury approximately:

- 30 million board feet of hardwood caskets, including rainforest woods
- 80,272 tons of steel caskets
- 17,500 tons of copper and bronze caskets
- 14,000 tons of steel vaults
- 1,636,000 tons of reinforced concrete vaults
- 4.3 million gallons of embalming fluid which usually includes formaldehyde