

City of Bastrop
Cemetery Advisory Board Meeting
August 15, 2013 4:00 p.m.
City Hall Council Chambers
1311 Chestnut Street
Bastrop, Texas 78602

The Cemetery Advisory Board met in a regularly scheduled meeting on August 15, 2013 at 4:00p.m., in the Council Chambers of the City Hall at 1311 Chestnut Street, Bastrop, Texas. Cemetery Board members present were Terry Sanders, Carl Spooner, Ted Schaefer, Mary Williams and Jerry Woehl. Staff in attendance was Karla Stovall, Tracy Waldron, Zana Jones and Trey Job.

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Board Chair Terry Sanders at 4:00p.m.

II. Announcements

Karla Stovall announced that there is an open seat on the Board, and if members are aware of anyone who may be interested in filling the seat, have that person submit a memo to the Mayor through Interim City Secretary Traci Chavez. Carl Spooner asked how many years the term is for the vacant seat. Ms. Stovall responded that the term is for three years. Ms. Stovall also announced that the Mayor will appoint the person to fill the vacancy. Terry Sanders asked if Joel Reed resigned his Board position. Ms. Stovall explained that the term was up for his place on the Board, and Mr. Reed chose not to submit a request to the Mayor to be reappointed.

III. Public Comments. [Note: By law, the Board cannot undertake discussion or take any action on Public Comments received at the meeting, but can: (1) recite Board/City policy on the points raised and/or (2) place items on upcoming agenda for both discussion and action at that upcoming meeting.]

There were no Public Comments.

IV. Consideration, discussion and/or approval of the Cemetery Advisory Board's April 24, 2013 meeting minutes.

Carl Spooner made a motion to approve the minutes. Motion was seconded by Jerry Woehl and carried unanimously.

V. Consideration, discussion and acceptance of Fiscal Year 2014 budget.

Karla Stovall presented the proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2014. Ms. Stovall stated that she expects the revenues to be about the same next year fiscal year as this year. Ms. Stovall also stated that lot sales are on target this year, and that there was a decline in 2012, but it appears to be back to normal. Terry Sanders asked to which funds the lot sales are allocated. Ms. Stovall responded that the proceeds are allocated to the Operating fund as the result of an amendment that was passed and prior to the amendment monies

allocated to the Permanent fund could not be utilized even for land purchases. Mr. Sanders restated that at this point, monies from lot sales are going into the Operating fund and nothing into a fund for future land purchases. Ms. Stovall responded that the monies are going into the Operating fund, which would be used to buy land, and if the Board chooses, a reserve amount could be set aside out of the Operating fund to be designated for purchasing land. Mr. Sanders added that he saw that there was a deficit between expenditures and revenues last year, which was not covered from the general fund balance. Ms. Stovall concurred and added that the Cemetery was drawing down from the Operating fund balance every year to "stay afloat". Mr. Sanders asked if the Board is satisfied that land will not be able to be purchased at the current rate. Mr. Sanders also asked Ms. Stovall if land were to be purchased where the funds would come from. Ms. Stovall responded from the Cemetery fund balance and reminded the Board that the Permanent funds were move to Operating knowing that we also have the General fund. Mr. Sanders asked where the monies that came from the Cemetery Association are represented. Ms. Stovall explained that those monies are in the fund balance in the Permanent Fund or Operating Fund based on their original designation, and the two funds were kept separate when received from the Association. Mr. Sanders reconfirmed that there was a beginning fund balance of \$208,000 on October 1, 2012, and that those funds represented those monies that came from the Cemetery Association. Ms. Stovall concurred. Mr. Sanders asked if the money from the Cemetery Association that was given with the intent that it would never be touched and/or accessed and only the interest used, is still there. Ms. Stovall answered that those monies are still in the Permanent fund, which will never be touched and that the interest earned on those monies is moved to the Operating fund, but she has had some concerns since interest rates have been so low. Mr. Sanders stated that he wanted to make sure "that we are still protecting what we originally intended to protect". Ms. Stovall explained that the expenditures are greater than the revenues, and last year discussed transferring in from the General fund to balance the Cemetery fund, and it was determined at that time to allow the Cemetery Operating fund stay as it was and continue drawing it down to a certain balance. Ms. Stovall stated that a discussion will need to be held with City Manager Mike Talbot within the next year to determine at what level the Operating fund balance would reach before the City's General fund will start transferring in to ensure the Cemetery fund balance is safe, and to also position Mr. Talbot to buy land for the Cemetery. Ms. Stovall told the Board that she met with Forrest Chalmers the previous week to let him know that she was proposing to discontinue contracting out the mowing services this next fiscal year and to hire a full-time maintenance worker under the Park's Department that reports to Trey Job the Director of Public Works and Parks. Ms. Stovall explained that this employee will be full-time at the Cemetery and their responsibilities will include mowing, assisting with markings, ensuring permits are issued for work that is being done by contracts, and making sure the Cemetery is taken care of. Ms. Stovall noted that she found the costs of hiring the full-time employee and contracting out the mowing to be close to the same; and that she has had discussions with Mr. Job regarding providing staff from Public Works and Parks to assist the Cemetery worker with mowing when time would be a constraint such as a special holiday. Ms. Stovall added that she feels it will be advantageous to have someone staffed at the Cemetery full time from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Carl Spooner commented that it will take some of the responsibility off the City staff that has to currently go and mark the plots. Ms. Stovall noted that lot sales, issuing of permits, as well as maintaining of all records will continue to be handled by the Finance Department, and having someone full time would also allow for monitoring in the Cemetery which is currently just by chance. Ms. Stovall stressed that this is no way reflective of the service that Mr. Chalmers provided or the quality of his job and she feels he has done a wonderful job. Mr. Spooner commented that Mr. Chalmers "has been the best one we have had at the Cemetery." Ms. Stovall stated that she included in the budget line item for the Cemetery worker, the salary, tools, fuel and lube; and the City would be purchasing a truck and mower from the General fund. Mr. Sanders asked if this is a management decision the City is making, what influence the Cemetery Board has in

it and if they Board is being asked for their approval to do this because it is not like the City needs the approval. Ms. Stovall agreed that it is a management decision and would like their approval, and added that the Board knows the Cemetery better than anyone. Mr. Sanders indicated that he is trying to figure out the legality of this, if the City makes the decision, and that he has difficulty with the proposal and wonders if the City has looked at what it costs to keep the Cemetery managed, and now the City will have to buy a truck which will cost monies from the General fund, which will not be reflected in the Cemetery budget, so it will be costing the City more as opposed to contracting it out. Mr. Job responded that the City was going to purchase a truck anyway. Ted Schaefer noted that the full time worker would be overlooking the Cemetery and if something is going on they can report it. Mr. Job stated that his department currently has three people going to the Cemetery to pick up limbs and trash and other things, which is at no cost. Mr. Sanders responded that would happen in either scenario. Mr. Job added that by this person being at the Cemetery full time, his department would not have to provide people who perform other jobs and send them to the Cemetery. Mr. Spooner asked if the full time worker would be opening the Cemetery and added that he understands the Police Department gets busy and has other things in the mornings and doesn't get the gates open, but at times he has been by at 10:30 and 11:00 in the morning and the gates are not open. Ms. Stovall responded that if the gates are not open by the time the worker gets there at 8:00 a.m., then that person would open them; and would act as a backup to the Police Department for that responsibility. Mary Williams asked where the person would be located in the Cemetery and if there would be a booth. Ms. Stovall explained that there is a building towards the back of the Cemetery which has water and electricity and funding has been added to the Cemetery budget to make it a small office. Ms. Stovall also explained that the person will report to Jason Alfaro the Parks Foreman, and they would go to the Public Works building in the mornings to discuss their daily duties before reporting to the Cemetery. Mr. Spooner asked if they would punch time cards. Mr. Job responded no. Ms. Stovall responded time sheets. Mr. Sanders noted that the City was going to buy a truck anyway, and asked if Mr. Chalmers were at the Cemetery, how the truck would be used. Mr. Job responded that the truck was going to be purchased for Public Works from the General fund, and the truck that is being removed from the fleet would be assigned to the Cemetery worker, and that it would not have anything to do with Mr. Chalmers. Mr. Sanders stated that he doesn't really understand any of this. Mr. Job replied that the City is not spending any more money than already planned; and currently the problem is when his department has to provide Mr. Chalmers help in order to complete the mowing for a holiday, or pickup limbs, trim trees, or build stages for Memorial Day programs. Mr. Job added that his department takes care of all the problems now, whereas with a full time worker these problems would be taken care of on a daily basis. Ms. Stovall added that she and Mr. Job see this as a "win, win" situation for the Cemetery and Public Works. Mr. Spooner added that having a person on site will put a stop to people running their dogs in the Cemetery. Mr. Job noted that there had been some issues with machinery leaving tracks over graves, and this position would allow someone to be there to monitor the contractors, and also to mark off gravesites. Ms. Stovall noted that the worker would also mark for headstones and that there have been times where the City has marked for the headstone but the contractor did not set the headstone in the marked space, so the oversight provided by the worker will help prevent these occurrences. Ms. Stovall added that the salary is still in discussion, and there is a preliminary number in the budget, and the person will need to be able to have some oversight, be a "go getter", able to work independently, and they will need to hire someone above a maintenance worker. Ms. Williams asked if the position will be open to the public. Ms. Stovall responded yes. Mr. Spooner asked if the Cemetery will be closed during the lunch hour. Ms. Stovall responded that it will remain open during that time. Mr. Spooner added that during the lunch hour is when the fences were lost. Ms. Stovall added that the lunch time could always be structured for the staff person. Mr. Spooner responded that it is better than what we have now. Ms. Stovall explained that she had budgeted additional monies for grounds maintenance in anticipation of

more projects, and this is the proposed budget that she is bringing to the Board for their consideration. Ms. Stovall added that their being the Advisory Board, she wants to respect their position and if there are line items that they have questions about, she will be glad to answer them. Mr. Sanders asked the if interest rate the monies from the Cemetery Association was making was ½%, and then asked the Board, considering their obligations that the money is to never be touched and only the interest used for maintenance, if there is anything to prevent the money from being invested in mutual funds or something. Ms. Stovall responded that she would have to speak with the City's investment officer and would have to follow the City's investment policy. Mr. Sanders stated that it would be risky for the money and that you never know what will happen with the stock market, but feels the money is doing absolutely no good where it is now. Mr. Schaefer noted that when the funds were first established, the people that set them up did not realize what was going to happen to Bastrop or the Cemetery. Mr. Sanders commented that the money was given with the best of intentions, but he hates to see it set there and nothing happen. Jerry Woehl commented that what the Board is being told is somewhere down the road we will need to use the money. Ms. Stovall responded that based on the way it is written, that money can never be touched and only the interest earned can be used. She also added that it is in CD's which are earning "ok" money and it is secure and that an investment advisor looked over the portfolio about a month ago and thought the rates were great, and advised her to "sit tight and hold on to them". Ms. Stovall added that she can look into investment options as long as they meet the City and State investment requirements that are required to be adhered too; but currently it is now keeps us conservative and the money safe, and if we do go in that direction she will bring it to the Board for discussion. Ms. Stovall reiterated that the Permanent fund monies will be there forever. Mr. Sanders added that he is just trying to get more use out of it. Mr. Schaefer asked Ms. Stovall if she needs anything from the Board in order to continue on with the Budget and Ms. Stovall responded an acceptance from the Board. Mr. Woehl restated that a salary has not been determined for the new position. Ms. Stovall responded that an estimate was put in the budget, and that she and Mr. Job have been in discussions and they may want the person to have more oversight, so it is a "ball park" number. Mr. Job noted that the position will require someone who can work independently and be a self-starter, and that he will be glad to make sure they are doing their job but he cannot be at the Cemetery all of the time, and the person should be like the worker that is there now. Mr. Sanders asked if there is a temporary worker there now, and Ms. Stovall responded that the seasonal worker is there now and by hiring a full-time worker the seasonal worker will not be needed. Mr. Woehl noted that he hasn't seen anyone working in the Cemetery and Mr. Spooner responded that she is working on the north fence line. Mr. Job added that the worker has only been there about two weeks. Mr. Spooner noted that they cleaned the fence line and mowed the ditch. Mr. Sanders asked if we didn't have Mr. Chalmers now, if there is someone to mow the Cemetery during the interim. Ms. Stovall responded that we have Parks and Public Works. Mr. Job added that his department has mowers. Mr. Sanders asked the Board if there were any other questions on the budget. Mr. Schaefer made a motion to accept the budget, seconded by Mr. Spooner, accepted unanimously.

VI. Informational update to Board on development of the Memorial Section.

Karla Stovall told the Board that Memorial Section Subcommittee members Terry Sanders, Ted Schaefer and Tom Scott met with Ms. Stovall and Zana Jones on June 12, 2013 and discussed the parameters for establishing the Memorial Section. Ms. Stovall noted that she feels that the meeting resulted in good information. Ms. Stovall also advised that the Subcommittee met again on August 1, 2013 at the proposed site where Finance staff had marked off the area to show the parameters of which the Subcommittee approved. Ms. Stovall stated that she is working on the Resolution and when complete will take it to Legal for review, and then to the Board at which time the Board will have an opportunity to make changes and

revisions. Mr. Sanders noted that staff had laid out the area very well so that you could see the spaces which are 2½ feet wide for the headstone and there is a 2½ foot walkway between each row. Ms. Stovall added that she thinks the Board will be pleased with the results.

VII. Consideration, discussion and possible action on report back from City Manager Mike Talbot regarding real estate.

Karla Stovall informed the Board that City Manager Mike Talbot was unable to attend the meeting and from what she had been told he had been unable to purchase land. Ms. Stovall advised that Mr. Talbot had put an offer on the property that had been on the market and the owners declined the offer and pulled the property from the market, even though the offer was what the owners had requested. Ms. Stovall told the Board that Mr. Talbot will continue looking at other properties because he knows the Board wants to buy land. Ms. Stovall asked the Board to contact Mr. Talbot if they hear of any properties for sale. Carl Spooner asked if Mr. Talbot was able to find out anything about the property on the north side of Cedar Street adjacent to the Cemetery. Ms. Stovall responded that she was not aware Mr. Talbot having any information on that property and she is hoping that he will be able to attend the next meeting. Terry Sanders asked if that was the Huffman property. Mr. Spooner responded that Huffman property was the east and the property he was speaking of was to the north of Cedar Street. Mr. Sanders then asked if there was 40 to 50 acres in the property. Mr. Spooner responded that he doesn't know and that when he talked Mr. Talbot years ago, he was going to research to find how much property was there. Ms. Stovall asked if the property would still be considered adjacent since there would be a road between it and the Cemetery. Mr. Sanders responded that it would be and that he had called the owners several years ago regarding the property and they were asking \$50,000 per acre. Ms. Stovall added that Mr. Talbot will continue to look at real estate and that he wanted to attend this meeting but had another meeting come up that he had to attend.

VIII. Informational update to Board, by Staff, on matters related to the Fairview Cemetery operations and maintenance.

Trey Job informed the Board that the temporary seasonal worker has cleaned the fence line and finished the northeast side this week. Mr. Job also noted that the seasonal worker had trimmed trees and cleaned the gazebo for a Memorial Service that was planned for the weekend and that he feels she is doing a great job, is a hard worker and is taking care of business. Carl Spooner asked Mr. Job if this is the person that he is thinking about putting in the full-time position. Mr. Job responded that he doesn't know but that she is doing a good job. Karla Stovall responded that she is a temporary seasonal worker, so if she wanted the full time position should have to reapply. Ted Schaefer informed Mr. Job that there is an elm tree along the roadway just as enter the Cemetery that appears to be dead and Mr. Job said he will look into it. Terry Sanders asked if there is something coming up this next month. Zana Jones responded that a family is holding a memorial service on Saturday and they asked to use the gazebo located on the hill in the newer section. Mr. Spooner asked if there is a funeral on Saturday. Ms. Jones responded no, only a memorial. Mr. Sanders asked when the Ann Beck event is going to happen. Ms. Jones responded on Confederate Hero's day which is in October.

IX. Consideration, discussion and possible action on setting the dates and times for next Cemetery Advisory Board meeting(s).

No meeting date was set. The Board decided unanimously that the Finance Department will notify them when the next meeting date is set.

X. Invitation for input from Board Members related to issues for possible inclusion on the next meeting agenda.

There were no issues mentioned for inclusion on the next meeting agenda.

XI. Adjourn.

Carl Spooner made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:40p.m. Motion was seconded by Mary Williams and carried unanimously.

APPROVED:

ATTESTED:

Terry Sanders, Chair

Mary Williams, Secretary