

**Town of Stratford, NH**  
**By laws of the Municipal Cemeteries**

**Introduction**

**Declaration of Policy**

The cemetery trustees hereby ordain that the following bylaws be established to govern the proper operation and use of all municipal cemeteries in the Town of Stratford, now or hereafter established. The town desires to have its cemeteries maintained in the best economically possible manner and firmly believes that these policies are necessary for the protection of lot and grave owners, and for the proper conduct and good order of the cemeteries.

**Application of the Rules and Regulations**

The cemetery trustees upon majority vote and for good cause shown, may modify, suspend, repeal, or amend the provisions of these policies in whole or in part. It is the intent of the cemetery trustees that if any provisions of this ordinance are held to be invalid or unconstitutional, such invalidity or unconstitutionality shall not affect the validity or the remaining provisions or parts thereof.

**Chain of Command**

All cemetery business has to go through the working Trustee Chairperson. This includes all plotting of lots, conveying lots, burials, signing of forms, receiving money for the lots, work details, etc. All the cemetery trustees will be notified before any cemetery transactions are made.

**General Regulations**

The following shall be the general rules and regulations for the use of municipal cemeteries:

**Conduct in Cemeteries**

No person shall:

1. Enter a cemetery except through an established gate or entrance way.
2. Pick or mutilate any flowers, either wild or domestic, or disturb any tree, shrub, or other plant material other than on a lot owned by that person or with the express permission of the lot owner.
3. Use the cemeteries as a picnic ground.
4. Other than in connection with a religious service, consume or possess alcoholic beverages in a cemetery.
5. Use any form of advertising on cemetery premises.
6. Discharge firearms in or adjacent to any cemetery. This prohibition shall not apply to authorized volleys at burial services conducted by recognized military organizations or associations of the United States of America.
7. Injure or deface any monument, stone, fence, or other structure or property within any cemetery.
8. Allow dogs or other domestic animals to run at large within a cemetery.
9. Allow any child under the age of ten (10) years in any cemetery unless accompanied by an adult.
10. Ride horseback within or through any cemetery, except in conjunction with burial services.
11. Camp or build a fire or have a barbecue or sleep within any cemetery.

### **Traffic Regulations**

1. No person shall operate or cause to operate any vehicle within a cemetery except on roads designed for that purpose.
2. No vehicle shall be driven in excess of ten (5) miles per hour upon any road in a cemetery.
3. No person shall unload any stone, dirt or other material from trucks in any cemetery, except the cemetery department in the normal discharge of their work, unless written permission has been received from the sexton of cemeteries or the cemetery trustees.
4. Any person operating a vehicle within any cemetery shall be subject to all the traffic laws of the State of New Hampshire and the Town of Stratford applicable to motor vehicle operation.
5. Snowmobiles, ATVs, dirt bikes, bicycles, tricycles, scooters, skateboards, and go carts are not allowed within the boundaries of any cemetery.
6. When the cemeteries are closed for the winter, the cemeteries will be closed to all vehicular traffic with the exception of the cemetery department or licensed funeral director. This will apply until the cemeteries are opened in the spring.

### **Establishment of Cemeteries**

The Town of Stratford shall have the final authority for the location and establishment of cemeteries within the corporate limits of the Town, and shall, as the need arises, set aside new ground areas for this purpose in accordance with RSA 289:2 or any amendments thereto.

### **Existing Cemeteries**

The following named existing cemeteries shall be deemed to have been established as municipal cemeteries at their present location: the Baldwin Cemetery, the Stratford Center Cemetery, the Burnside Cemetery, and the Haynes Cemetery.

### **Plotting of Cemeteries**

All Cemeteries must have a detailed map showing all the plots and where burials are made.

All maps must be kept up to date by the Cemetery Trustees.

All Cemetery Trustees will have a copy of the maps plus one at the town vault.

All lots in one section must be first conveyed prior to the conveyance of any lot in an undeveloped section.

### **Casket/vault Lot Size Established – upright headstones allowed**

Unless otherwise expressly designated, standard lot size for municipal cemeteries are hereby established as being: Single Burial Lot - five (5) by ten (10) feet; Standard (Double) Burial Lot – ten (10) by ten (10) feet – if possibly.

### **Cremation Lot Size – No upright headstones**

In the case of cremation interment, the following guidelines shall apply:

1. Minimum conveyance is one (1) 36” by 36” lot.
2. Maximum number of cremation interments:
  - a. Shall be no more than six (6) when a single size lot is used for cremations only.  
No Headstone – only granite flat markers.
  - b. When a standard size lot has a combination of cremations and casket/vault burials, the following formula will be used: a standard size lot is broken up into

two (2) single burial plots; each burial plot will be subject to a maximum of one (1) casket/vault or five (5) cremations.

3. All cremation sites & full burial sites, must have a granite flat ground marker (one foot by 2 foot by 4 inches thick)( with their full name, born date and death date inscribed) installed at the time of the burial.

### **Purchase and Conveyance of Lots**

#### **Conditions of Lot Purchases**

Lots purchased in the lot sections of cemeteries of the Town of Stratford shall be conveyed by a special deed for human burial purposes only and shall be subject at all times to the provisions of the Town Cemetery By-laws of the Town of Stratford, these by-laws, and with any articles of agreement or application state laws.

#### **Purchase Procedure**

Lots in the laid out cemeteries of the Town of Stratford shall be selected and purchased from and with the consent of the Trustees of cemeteries, subject to the control of the trustees of the cemetery. Only residents or past residents of the Town of Stratford can purchase a cemetery lot. Payment for lots purchased shall be made to the cemetery trustee chairman, who will deposit the funds with the Town of Stratford Treasurer. Such purchase shall be evidenced by a deed prepared by the cemetery trustee chairman. Such deed shall give the following information: Name of the purchaser, purchase price, the amount paid, name of the cemetery, lot number and section in which located, names of family members who will be buried in the lot, type of burial (full or cremation) and shall be presumptive evidence of ownership of the lot(s) described therein. Purchaser shall have 60 days to install granite corner markers approved by the cemetery trustees. Corner stones must be installed. Corner stones must have the first letter of their last name inscribed. After one year if corner stones aren't installed, the Cemetery Trustees have the right to give that lot to someone else.

#### **Records**

The keeping of the records of the cemeteries of the Town of Stratford shall be the responsibility of the Trustees of the Cemeteries. All maps showing laid out sections of each cemetery and the records of lot ownership and burials therein shall be kept by the Cemetery Trustees. Copies of all deeds conveyed for lot purchase shall be recorded by the Town of Stratford in a book provided for this purpose which shall be subject to the control of the Cemetery Trustees. The Stratford Town Clerk shall also keep a record of every burial in any cemetery under the town's control, showing the date of burial and the name of the person buried, type of burial, when these particulars can be obtained, and the lot or part thereof, in which the burial was made.

#### **General**

1. The cemeteries are to be mowed for Memorial Day, the Fourth of July, and Labor Day at a minimum; they will be mowed more often if funds are available.
2. No trees, no shrubs, no bushes are to be planted in the cemeteries.
3. Flowers are to be set in front of headstones no more than 10" deep.
4. No fences or walls are to be installed around individual cemetery lots.
5. Corner posts and markers are to be installed at ground level.
6. Cemetery lots are not to be raised.

7. All headstones must be approved by trustees.
8. If a resident asks for a lot and does not pay the perpetual care fee and then moves out of town before the lot is used, the lot will revert back to the town with no further obligation to or preference for the former resident.
9. All burials will be done by the sexton or by the cemetery trustees and one or both have to be present for the burial service to cover the hole ASAP after the burial service.
10. All burials will have flat stone marker with the person's name, birth and death date installed immediately after the burial.
11. No glass containers for flowers, plants etc. are allowed

### **Headstones**

A single grave lot **can** have an upright or slant headstone but has to stay within the lot boundaries and approved by the Cemetery Trustees. Can't be any larger than 18" height by 24" wide by 6" thick. All other lots are allowed one upright headstone and one flat ground marker per person. Headstone base (upright) is to be a minimum of at least 3 feet deep (3 feet).

All headstones have to have prior approval of the Cemetery trustees.

If a single size lot is used for cremations only, no headstone is allowed only flat ground markers.

### **Corner stones**

Corner markers must be purchased and installed within 60 days of purchase of the lot. All corner markers will be installed as per the Cemetery Trustees approval.

### **Burial vaults**

Burial vault covers must be one piece and be a minimum of 6" thick.

All full burials will have a vault.

### **Cemetery Maintenance**

Responsibility of the Cemetery Trustees: the general maintenance of the cemeteries and grounds shall be the responsibility of the Cemetery Trustees. The Cemetery Trustees shall determine what acts are necessary to improve and maintain the appearance and condition of the cemeteries within their jurisdiction. This includes removing existing trees or shrubs deemed in the best interest of the cemetery, infringes or abutting lots, or if inconvenient to the care and maintenance of the lot(s). Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the cemetery trustees shall address such items as the upkeep of the drives, buildings, fences, spring and fall clean up, raking and general periodic mowing of the grass.

### **Opening and Closing of Cemeteries**

Gates are closed to vehicular traffic from November to May.

### **Dogs**

1. No general walking or unaccompanied exercising of dogs is permitted within the bounds of a cemetery.
2. A dog may accompany a family member visiting a family lot; the owner is required to clean up after the dog

November 21, 2019

**Cleaning**

- 1. A clean up day will occur in October– All flowers (real or plastic) weathes, etc.will be removed at this time. Nothing can be put back on until Memorial Day. Items not removed by that date may be destroyed.

**Bird Sanctuary**

No one visiting the cemetery may disturb birds using the cemetery as a bird sanctuary (such as “Killdeer”). Likewise, letting the family pet chase the birds.

**Emergency or Unanticipated Expenses**

- 1. If major damage and/or repairs are needed at a cemetery that exceed the planned budget, the expenses will be discussed with the Board of Selectmen at a meeting about the cemetery extra expense.
- 2. An article will be placed on the warrant the following year to raise money for the specific expense if the expense can wait.

If any particular element of the By-Laws is found unenforceable, it will not invalidate the remaining By-Laws.

Date Approved: Nov 21, 2019

Updated and Revised 2019  
 Updated and Revised 2016  
 Updated and Revised 2011  
 Updated and Revised 2010  
 Originally Approved, 1996

Ronald B Connary  
 Cemetery Trustee

Charles Gaslet  
 Cemetery Trustee

Rose Connary  
 Cemetery Trustee