

GRAND ISLE CEMETERY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

February 10, 2026, 4:30 p.m., Grand Isle Town Office

Meeting was called to order by Valerie Hunter, Chair at 4:27 p.m.

Commissioners present: Brian Allen, Lucille Campbell, Sue Lawrence, Suzanne Sauvé. Val Hunter was present on Zoom.

Guests: none

Additions or deletions to agenda: Sue added South Hero's Home Burial Policy and handed out the copy of the policy which seems to reference the VT Statutes on home burials. Commissioners will read it and decide at our March meeting if a home burial policy should be added to Grand Isle's Cemetery Rules and Regulations.

Minutes: Brian moved to accept the January 13, 2026 minutes. Sue seconded. Passed with all in favor.

Administrative Report – Sue Lawrence

Financials – report presented, only changes were interest amounts added.

Lawn Care & Maintenance – nothing to report

Burials & Lot Sales – none

Old Business:

Charter update: At the public hearing for the proposed town charter on Jan. 19, 2026 Sue read the statement from the Cemetery Commission. The provision for cemetery commissioners to be appointed rather than elected was removed from the proposed town charter by vote of the Selectboard at their Jan. 19, 2026 meeting. Val thanked Sue and Lucille for bringing this proposal to the attention of the Cemetery Commission and for presenting our statement to the Selectboard. The statement is attached to these minutes.

New Business:

Lawn Care Contract: Current contract with Jesse Sauvé is for May 1, 2025 to April 30, 2026. Consensus was that the upcoming contract should be May 1, 2026 to April 30, 2027 if Jesse continues to do the cemetery lawn care.

Mapping of Cemetery: Discussion with Sue as to whether the town has the NEMRC mapping module. It does not. The NEMRC cemetery module includes the capability of adding GPS coordinates and photos to the data. Lucille presented the Londonderry, VT, Essex, Vt and Ludlow, VT on-line cemetery databases. Essex and Ludlow have interactive cemetery maps with data. Suzanne's opinion was that Londonderry's site with data but no map was more user friendly than the two sites with maps. Sue was asked about cost of adding the on-line lister cards through NEMRC. She thought it was between \$2,000 and \$3,000. Lucille said that

companies like Legacy Mark that do GPS positioning, photograph the gravestones and develop the maps can charge between \$5,000 and \$50,000 depending on the size of the cemetery. Consensus was that we continue to research this and see if our cemetery records in NEMRC can be put on-line using NEMREC. Brian suggested that we begin with the Hoag Cemetery as that is small.

Sue will contact Chris at NEMRC to ask about the mapping module and whether there can be more than one user on the cemetery module. Suzanne and Lucille would be willing to check the cemetery data for duplications.

Brian moved to adjourn, Lucille seconded. Passed. Meeting adjourned at 5:04 p.m. Next meeting March 10, 2026 at 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Lucille Campbell, Recording Secretary

Statement read to the Grand Isle Selectboard at Town Charter public hearing Jan. 19, 2026:

The five elected Grand Isle Cemetery Commissioners are in unanimous agreement with the following statement. (presented at public hearing Jan. 19, 2026)

The Selectboard did not ask the Commissioners prior to writing the proposed charter if there was a need for the Selectboard to take control of the appointment of Cemetery Commissioners. Currently there are five elected Commissioners with staggered five-year terms. One Commissioner is elected each year by ballot vote on Town Meeting Day.

The Cemetery Commission has had no problem in the last 20 years filling the five positions by election. In the last 10 years there have been 3 resignations for health reasons and 1 death. Each time a good replacement was appointed by the Commission to fill the vacancy until Town Meeting. Those people chose to run for election to a full term. Cemetery Commissioners have been elected in this town since at least 1907.

The term of five years may seem lengthy, but we all agree that it takes a year or more to become familiar with the rules and statutes governing cemeteries in Vermont.

One of our concerns is that appointed commissioners may not have the feeling of responsibility to the position that those who are elected feel, and they will not complete the term. One of our Commissioners described the Commission as running like a "well-oiled machine." That comes from working together for more than a couple of years.

The residents of Grand Isle who have family, friends and neighbors buried in our cemeteries deserve to be able to vote to determine who takes care of our cemeteries, the final resting places of many. That should not be the responsibility of a 5-member Selectboard.

We would like to remind the Selectboard of statute V.S.A. 18 § 5373 which reads as follows: “When a town votes to place its public burial grounds under the charge of cemetery commissioners, it shall elect separately a board of three or five cemetery commissioners, who shall have the care and management of such burial ground and exercise all the powers, rights, and duties with respect to such care and management **and all responsibility on the part of the selectboard shall cease.**” The right to vote, the ability to choose, should not be taken from the legal residents of the town.

In closing, the Cemetery Commissioners strongly urge the selectboard to remove the Cemetery Commissioners from the list of appointed officers in the proposed charter. They should be elected officers. Do not create a problem where there is none.

It is ironic that in the year of the 250th anniversary of the founding of America, our Selectboard is discussing taking the power of the vote away from the citizens.

Val Hunter, Chair Sue Lawrence Brian Allen Suzanne Sauvé Lucille Campbell