Springdale Cemetery Management Authority Proceedings

Monday, July 20, 2026 - 3014 N. Prospect Rd., Peoria, IL 4:00 PM

1. Call to Order & Welcome

The Springdale Cemetery Management Authority Board was called to order by Chairperson Ma on Monday, July 20, 2026, at 4:00 P.M., at the Volunteer & Maintenance Building.

2. Roll Call

Present:
Kathy Ma – Chair
Jarrod Martis – Vice Chair
Pam Johnson – Treasurer
Lisa Fisher – Member
Joyce Harant – Member
Therese Brink – Member *(arrived at 4:06 PM)*

Absent:
Betty Duncan – Secretary

Also Present:
Aaron Comte – General Manager
Courtney Coe – Staff

3. Pledge of Allegiance

After a quorum was established, Chairperson Ma asked everyone to stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. Citizens' Opportunity to Address the Board

It was determined there were no citizens present to address the Board.

Board Member Brink arrived in the meeting room at 4:06 P.M.

5. Approval of Minutes

5.1. Request to Approve the June 15, 2026, Springdale Cemetery Management Authority Proceedings

Chairperson Ma requested a motion to approve the proceedings as written.

Approve the June 15, 2026, Springdale Cemetery Management Authority Proceedings, As Written

Motion was made by Board Member Fisher to approve the June 15, 2026, proceedings as written, seconded by Board Member Harant. Motion passed (5 Yeas, 0 Nays, 1 Abstention).

Yays: Chairperson Ma, Martis, Johnson, Fisher, Harant;
Nays: None;
Abstentions: Johnson (due to absence from the June meeting)

6. General Manager's Report & Action Items

6.1. Request to Receive & File the June 2026 Report

General Manager Comte reviewed the June 2026 burial report, noting lower service volumes than past years but strong year-to-date metrics. He commended staff member Luke Stidman for robust monument and lot sales, pointing out that fewer services were offset by steady revenue.

General Manager Comte reviewed signage improvements implemented by the City of Peoria, which included warnings referencing the Cemetery Oversight Act, violation classifications as misdemeanor offenses, and updated traffic and hours signage. He noted comprehensive grave-decoration policies and visitor guidelines would be implemented by the end of the year pending available capital funding.

A new promotional mailer highlighting summer events and volunteer opportunities was distributed to the Board. In response to an inquiry from Chairperson Ma regarding project development, General Manager Comte explained that it was the result of a collaborative effort between a new ICC graduate-intern and OnPoint Marketing’s graphic designer, emphasizing that utilizing experienced team members to mentor new interns helps reduce professional service hours and lower costs. Board Member Johnson shared a compliment from Kim Armstrong, who expressed strong appreciation for the Authority's ongoing outreach initiatives.

General Manager Comte reported positive media coverage and high public engagement during the inaugural Juneteenth tour, which generated the cemetery's highest-ever Facebook share volume. He highlighted visits by the family of honoree Mark Clark, Reverend Hightower of the Peoria NAACP, and Christ Lutheran School students, who placed floral arrangements at gravesites. Chairperson Ma and General Manager Comte discussed retaining Juneteenth signage through the Fourth of July weekend, stocking self-guided tour flyers at the entrance, and developing future seasonal or themed tours. They also considered potential partnerships with Bradley University or Illinois Central College to create custom digital app-based tours, with Treasurer Johnson noting that student classes frequently complete such applications as non-profit senior projects.

General Manager Comte reported a 14.4% increase in social media reach since May. Chairperson Ma and General Manager Comte discussed how these analytics provide valuable feedback on community interest, helping align Springdale's digital and video strategies with those of major metropolitan cemeteries in Chicago and St. Louis. Treasurer Johnson praised General Manager Comte's authentic narration in a recent mausoleum video. Further discussions explored replacing quarterly newsletters with social media updates, increasing video content for the Scattering Gardens, holiday wreath sales, and promoting pre-need planning.

General Manager Comte reported temporary road closures due to recent severe storms and heavy rain, noting that staff was actively coordinating with Peoria Public Works to obtain gravel and repair affected areas.

General Manager Comte addressed the two current Board vacancies (one City appointee and one County appointee), noting ongoing discussions with the County Board Chair to target candidates with civil engineering, roadway, or public works infrastructure experience. Chairperson Ma concurred that identifying specific desired characteristics would benefit the ongoing recruitment search.

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Receive And File The June 2026 General Manager's Report

Motion was made by Treasurer Johnson to receive and file the June 2026 General Manager's Report, seconded by Board Member Fisher. Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

6.2. Request to Discuss the Theft Incident that Occurred on July 8, 2026, Including but Not Limited to the Police Investigation, Insurance Claim, Security Measures, and Communications

General Manager Comte reported that on July 7 and 8, 2026, thieves stole copper downspouts and brass ventilation screens from the historic 1929 mausoleum, likely using gardening shears and the cover of Fourth of July fireworks. Earlier in the summer, staff recovered roughly 40 brass vases taken from gravesites and left in the woods.

Discussions were held regarding perimeter security vulnerabilities and unauthorized access points across the extensive property, including potential vehicle, all-terrain vehicle (ATV), or equipment access near the HGS parking lot and viaduct gap via the Washington Heights gate, which connects to the Rock Island Trail. General Manager Comte reported that an insurance claim had been filed with an estimated $10,000 deductible against custom architectural restoration repair estimates totaling approximately $60,000. He noted that he has been in communication with the Peoria Police Department (PPD) and Chief Dixon to develop a security upgrade plan that includes expanded camera surveillance.

Board members and staff discussed parallel historic property thefts in the region affecting other local cemeteries and houses of worship, public outreach metrics—including high social media engagement and local radio appearances—and potential security partnerships with municipal and park entities. Chairperson Ma requested a formal security and budget allocation update for the next meeting to review the availability of capital funding from existing budget reserves.

6.3. Consideration and Possible Action regarding Temporary Access Request for Truck 'n Stuff Special Event (August 7, 2026)

General Manager Comte presented a request from Truck 'n Stuff, a local for-profit business, seeking temporary access across cemetery grounds on August 7, 2026, to utilize the former HGS parking lot for special event overflow parking and transport guests via the pedestrian tunnel underneath War Memorial Drive. Discussions were held regarding site protection, security monitoring, insurance verification, and cleanup guarantees.

Approve Temporary Access Request For Truck 'N Stuff Special Event, Subject To Stipulated Conditions

Motion was made by Chairperson Ma to approve the temporary access request for the August 7, 2026 event, subject to the business securing off-duty security personnel to monitor grounds activity, executing an official site-use and damage indemnity agreement, providing proof of commercial liability insurance, and completing a post-event property inspection and cleanup, seconded by Board Member Fisher. Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

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7. Treasurer's Report & Action Items

7.1. Request to Review and Approve the June 2026 Check Register

Treasurer Johnson reviewed the June 2026 Check Register, noting no unusual expenditures.

Approve The June 2026 Check Register

Motion was made by Chairperson Ma to approve the June 2026 Check Register as presented, seconded by Vice-Chair Martis. Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

7.2. Request to Review and Approve the June 2026 Financial Statements

Treasurer Johnson reviewed the June 2026 Financial Statements, asset balances, accounts receivable, and accounts payable. Discussions were held regarding year-to-date budget comparisons, noting that total revenues remained healthy due to strong marker sales offsetting lower pre-need crypt volume, and that administrative and facility expenses reflected timing variations associated with staff restructuring.

APPROVE THE JUNE 2026 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Motion was made by Board Member Fisher to approve the June 2026 Financial Statements as presented, seconded by Board Member Brink. Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

8. Standing Committees Reports

8.1. Request for an Update on the Springdale Historic Preservation Foundation

Board Member Martis reported that the Foundation's online merchandise shop was live on social media platforms, with product selections expanding and meeting schedules realigned. Chairperson Fisher requested the direct platform link be distributed to the Board. General Manager Comte provided an update on ADA compliance fundraising targets, highlighting plaza elevation adjustments that reduced slope requirements and lowered projected railing costs.

8.2. Request for an Update from the Events Committee

Board Member Ma and General Manager Comte reported on preliminary discussions regarding long-term planning for the upcoming 2029 175th cemetery anniversary and the 100th mausoleum centennial, noting efforts to identify committee leadership and to evaluate long-term options for sustainable, paid administrative support for grant writing and fundraising. Treasurer Johnson noted possibilities for outreach coordination with the Peoria Symphony Orchestra.

8.3. Request for an Update from the Finance Committee

Discussions were held regarding scheduling upcoming committee sessions to review employee benefit structures and timelines prior to the upcoming budget cycle.

8.4. Request for an Update from the Nominating Committee

It was determined that the Nominating Committee had no updates to report at that time.

9. Unfinished Business

It was determined there was no Unfinished Business to address at that time.

10. New Business

Discussions were held regarding upcoming autumn community events, including ways to

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maximize public participation and fundraising potential for the Yellow Bear Foundation's annual Screaming Pumpkin Race and October historical tours by Prairie Folklore Theater. Additional scheduling coordination was discussed regarding upcoming Finance Committee meetings and employee benefit reviews prior to budget discussions.

11. Executive Session

It was determined there was no need to enter into Executive Session at that time.

12. Next Scheduled Meeting – August 17, 2026

Chairperson Ma announced that the next regular meeting of the Springdale Cemetery Management Authority Board was scheduled for Monday, August 17, 2026, at 4:00 P.M.

13. Adjournment

Adjournment Of The July 20, 2026, Board Meeting

Motion was made by Board Member Fisher to adjourn, seconded by Treasurer Johnson. Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

The July 20, 2026, Regular Springdale Cemetery Management Authority Board meeting adjourned at 5:26 P.M.

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