



Richfield Village Cemetery Board Minutes
Wednesday, January 28, 2026, at 6:04 p.m.
Service Department Conference Room

Election of Cemetery Board Officers

- Board Chair: Jeff Stoppenhagen nominated himself and was elected Chair after a vote.
 - Yes votes from: Jeff Stoppenhagen, Jeff Newman, Pat Buckner, Ellen Anderson, Leisha Burrows.
- Vice Chair: Ellen Anderson nominated herself and was elected Vice Chair.
 - Primary duty: Run meetings when the Chair is unavailable.
 - Yes votes from: Jeff Stoppenhagen, Jeff Newman, Pat Buckner, Ellen Anderson, Leisha Burrows.
- Secretary: Pat Buckner was nominated and elected Secretary.

Mayor's Report and Salt Shortage

- The Mayor is seeking grant funding from Amelia Sykes' office to repair Road 303.
- The Village faces a severe road salt shortage impacting all of Northeast Ohio.
 - The Village has been virtually out of salt for three weeks.
 - An order for 800 tons placed three weeks ago is delayed; Cargill may deliver on Friday.
 - Due to the shortage, salting is limited to main roads, intersections, and hills.
 - Next year's plan: Order the full annual salt supply at once to build a reserve.

Cemetery Burial Residency Requirements

- The board discussed tightening restrictions on eligibility for bequeathed burial spaces, as defined in rule 945.02.
- Proposal: Anyone receiving a bequeathed plot must meet the same residency requirements as a direct purchaser.
 - Requirements: Village resident, township resident, or former resident of at least 10 years.
- Goal: Preserve limited cemetery space for residents, especially in West Richfield Cemetery, which has fewer than 100 in-ground spots remaining.
- Next step: Draft legislation for council vote.
- Note: The Director of Public Service has final authority, and the Mayor, with council approval, can override rules in specific cases.

Cemetery Space and Expansion

- West Richfield Cemetery Expansion: Consider requesting \$60,000 from council to fund engineering for the West Richfield Cemetery expansion.
 - Potential addition: Nearly 500 in-ground burial sites and over 100 cremation niches.
 - Funding is constrained due to a tight budget but may be possible if other capital projects come in under budget.



- Sales and Capacity:
 - Last year: 23 plot sales and 32 burials across both cemeteries.
 - Fairview's new columbarium: One niche sold.
 - Records issue: Unknown numbers of pre-sold, unused plots from long ago cannot be reclaimed due to poor documentation before the Village owned the cemeteries.
- Alternative Burial Options:
 - Brief discussion of stacked burials (one above another) to conserve space; not previously done and presents logistical challenges.
 - Current allowances: One full burial and up to two cremations per lot, or four cremations per lot.

Cemetery Improvements and Maintenance

- Water Well Restoration: The West Richfield Cemetery well was rebuilt and reinstalled last summer by the maintenance crew.
- New Kiosks: Planned for both cemeteries.
 - Size: 4x7 feet; will display section maps, rules via QR code, a link to find loved ones, and changeable date/event information.
- Section Signage: New signs on fluted aluminum poles will clearly mark cemetery sections.
- Headstone Cleaning: Doug Mayer will be re-employed this summer to continue cleaning, resetting, and re-leveling headstones.
- Benches: The memorial bench program was discussed to add seating; unclaimed benches are being refurbished and repainted.
- Front Wall Repair: Fairview's front wall is scheduled for repair and tuck-pointing in spring of 2026.
- Flower Vases: Consider adding in-ground flower vases near the columbarium's for visitors, as no designated spot for flowers currently exists.

Board Meeting Logistics

- Members should send discussion topics to Jeff Stoppenhagen for agenda inclusion.
- Meetings are generally held on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 6:00 PM.
- A quorum of four members is required.

Next Arrangements

- Defer approval of the previous meeting's minutes until February.
- Mayor: Present the \$60,000 West Richfield Cemetery expansion engineering request to council; if not approved, identify alternative funding options or phased engineering.
- Board: Begin drafting updated burial bequeathal rule language; assign a lead and set a timeline for a draft and council submission.
- Schedule a cemetery tour for board members; confirm date, time, and itinerary.
- Discuss and decide on in-ground flower vases for columbarium's; evaluate placement, cost, and maintenance at a future meeting.