

THE CORPORATION OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF MISSISSIPPI MILLS

**STAFF REPORT
(Report #)**

DATE: December 7th, 2021
TO: Committee of the Whole
FROM: Calvin Murphy, Recreation Manager
SUBJECT: **Service Standards for Municipal Cemeteries**

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT THE Committee of The Whole recommends to Council to approve the attached policy for Service Standards for Municipal Cemeteries as presented by The Recreation Manager.

BACKGROUND:

Over the last few months two residents of Mississippi Mills approached the Recreation Manager regarding a concern they had pertaining to the gates, corner posts and gravestone markers at the Old Methodist Cemetery on Highway 29. The residents were concerned with the deterioration that has occurred over the years and whether something could be done to remedy the situation. The Recreation Manager was in contact with two (2) masonry groups to review and obtain pricing for the work to repair the gates and corner posts at this location. The last quote was received the middle of October with pricing ranging from \$12,000 -\$20,000 to complete the work.

DISCUSSION:

The Recreation and Culture Department is currently responsible for the grass cutting and grounds maintenance of five (5) cemeteries located within the Municipality.

These cemeteries include:

Methodist Cemetery – County Road 29
Houston Cemetery – Concession 7, East Part Lot 6 (Ramsay ward)
Clayton Wesleyen Cemetery – Con 1, Lot 21 (Ramsay ward)
Robertson-Kellough Cemetery – Upper Perth Road at Wolfgrove Road
McDonald Cemetery – Concession 10, Lot 22, (Ramsay ward)

Over time the Municipality could receive more requests to take over other cemeteries in the area which will require more staff hours if we are to continue to maintain.

In recent conversation with Ray Porrill (Licensing Officer – Bereavement Authority of Ontario) he explained that it is the responsibility of the family and or the estate for repairs to gravestone markers in each of the cemeteries, but the Municipality is responsible for repairs to existing entrance gates, corner posts and grounds keeping duties. We are starting to witness more substantial costs to the municipality in this area.

The upkeep of these different elements in each cemetery is beyond what the municipality can manage financially. Cemeteries fall under the overall regulatory framework of the Bereavement Authority of Ontario. While there are often trust funds that are transferred to the Municipality when these cemeteries are assumed by the Municipality, they are not sufficient to cover regular grounds keeping and capital maintenance.

The current trust funds for municipal cemeteries include the following:

Houston Cemetery – (Royal Bank of Canada in the amount of \$557.78)
McDonald Cemetery – (Royal Bank of Canada in the amount of \$557.78)
Robertson-Kellough Cemetery – (Bank of Montreal in the amount of \$3000)

It should also be noted that the Municipality has a total of \$7500 in reserves for Cemetery repairs that can be used for work in any of the municipal cemeteries.

In discussion with the Chair of the Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee for Mississippi Mills, it was confirmed that the cemeteries are not designated as a Municipal heritage landmark, but they do have historical value. The Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee have offered to research and see what provincial grants might be available to help with future funding.

Seeing that these concerns are now being brought to our attention the following policy is here for your review, comment, and direction.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The extent of the financial implications is unknown at the present time, but as outlined in the report repair costs for the gates and corner posts repairs alone at the Old Methodist Cemetery on Highway 29 ranges from \$12,000- \$20,000. As the cemeteries continue to age over time there will be significant costs associated with the overall upkeep of these areas.

SUMMARY:

The implementation of a Service Standards policy for Municipal Cemeteries is intended to provide proper direction for the Municipality moving forward. It is recommended that Council approve the Service Standards policy for Municipal Cemeteries.

Respectfully submitted by,

Reviewed by:

Calvin Murphy,
Recreation Manager

Ken Kelly, CAO

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Service Standards For Municipal Cemeteries Policy