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MEMO

TO: County Commission
FROM: Robert W. Wilson
Date: August 1, 2024
Subject: Springvale Cemetery Policy

On July 1st the Commission adopted a 'Springvale Cemetery Markers, Decorations, Cleaning and Visitor Conduct Policy' recommended by the County Cemetery Board on June 24th. The Cemetery Board met again on July 22nd and recommended a 'Burial' policy that describes a prohibition of saving lots except in very specific circumstances and identifies that lots will be reserved for those who qualify for Final Disposition Assistance through the Cass County Human Service Zone.

For Commission consideration on August 5th is an attached policy that combines both policies – including all policy direction given in the two recommended policies - into a single policy. The updated Springvale Cemetery Policy will be numbered and placed within the Commission Policy Manual for ease of access and reference.

SUGGESTED MOTION: Adopt the Springvale Cemetery Policy as recommended by the County Cemetery Board and place it within the Commission Policy Manual as Policy 12.00.

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Springvale Cemetery is overseen and cared for by Cass County Government. It is reserved for those who qualify for Final Disposition Assistance through the Cass Human Service Zone. Concerns with Springvale Cemetery will be addressed by the Cass County Cemetery Sexton, the Cass County Cemetery Board, and the Board of Cass County Commissioners.

Markers:

Only markers with base (size 34" x 22" or smaller) are allowed to be placed at the grave site. No plaques (other than military markers) or upright monuments are allowed. All monument companies and/or families must contact the cemetery Sexton for approval for having the marker set at the cemetery. Springvale reserves the right to reject any marker or memorial which does not conform to the rules and regulations.

Decorations:

Grave decorations should be placed as close as possible to the grave marker to allow accessibility for lawn mowing equipment. If decorations interfere with normal grass mowing those items may be removed and/or discarded by cemetery staff.

Items NOT allowed include glass decorations, items over 36 inches in height, trees, shrubs, edging material, metal or plastic fences, benches and large concrete pots or planters.

Nothing may be placed on top of the grave other than black dirt and grass seed. Landscape rocks, stones, or mounded dirt on top of the grave are not allowed.

Graves are maintained by the cemetery and if additional dirt and grass seed needs to be placed, this will be completed by cemetery staff only.

Cleaning:

Springvale Cemetery will be thoroughly cleaned each spring (first week of April) and fall (first week of September). Grave decorations will be removed during both the fall and spring cleanups. If you have decorations you wish to save, you must remove them prior to the cleanup dates. The Cemetery staff will not hold decorations for families and decorations will be disposed of by Cemetery staff at the times designated for clean up.

Cemetery staff will use their discretion, throughout the year, in removing and discarding the items if they become unsightly or appear to have been ignored and abandoned.

Wind, rain, wildlife, and general maintenance of the cemetery (mowing lawn) may damage or even displace some grave decorations. Springvale is a public cemetery and items may also be lost due to vandals or thieves. Springvale is not responsible for damage or loss to decorations or markers that are placed on the grave site. The cemetery is not liable for any costs or damage to items removed from gravesites and discarded by staff in accordance with the rules and regulations.

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Wind, rain, wildlife, and general maintenance of the cemetery (mowing lawn) may damage or even displace some grave decorations. Springvale is a public cemetery and items may also be lost due to vandals or thieves. Springvale is not responsible for damage or loss to decorations or markers that are placed on the grave site. The cemetery is not liable for any costs or damage to items removed from gravesites and discarded by staff in accordance with the rules and regulations.

Saving of lots:

Lots will no longer be saved at Springvale Cemetery as of August 5, 2024. Prior to this policy being put in place there were lots saved for certain individuals. The Sexton has a list of these saved lots and who they are saved for. These will continue to be saved until they are needed for burial.

At the time of their death, the family members of the deceased individual must apply for funeral/burial assistance through the Cass County Human Service Zone. If they do not qualify then the cost of the saved lot will be equivalent to the price of the lowest cost lot at Holy Cross Cemetery, Fargo. This must be paid to Cass County prior to the burial occurring.

Individuals who have a saved lot cannot transfer it to another individual.

Purchasing of lots:

Lots can no longer be purchased at Springvale other than in the circumstance as indicated above (saved lots).

Open and close of grave:

The opening and closing of the grave must be coordinated through the Sexton of the Cemetery who will then also notify and coordinate with the gravedigger. Funeral Homes may dig the graves when burying cremated remains but must always notify the Sexton.

Burials and required documentation:

The cemetery Sexton must be notified of any burial that is to occur at Springvale Cemetery. Burials cannot be completed without the approval of the Sexton.

Appropriate paperwork (disposition permit or certificate of cremation) must be provided to the Sexton prior to the burial.

Two sets of cremated remains (two urns) may be buried in one lot. One set of cremated remains (one urn) may be buried on top of a full body interment (casket) with approval from family of the casketed deceased.

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All full body interments require a vault (outer burial container), to eliminate sunken graves as well as maintain a high level of care and follow North Dakota state law - ND Century Code 33-05.

Visitors:

Visitors to the cemetery grounds should respect the cemetery as a memorial to honor those who have died. The following are prohibited at the cemetery:

- The use of alcohol, illegal substances, and hallucinogenic drugs
- Fireworks and explosives of all kinds
- Sleeping or loitering on the cemetery grounds

Use roadways and do not travel with vehicles off the roads.

Use garbage cans at the cemetery to throw away trash.