

Cemetery Committee Consent Report for August 2022:

1. Opening Remarks:

-Praises for The Emanuel Cemetery Committee:

In the last 12 months we have received emails and comments from many sources **on how well the cemetery is run and how well the cemetery's overall appearance is.** This is due in part to:

- Karen's monthly cemetery updates (Cemetery Problem Resolution Forms).
- Meyer's "Consent" reports to the Board of Trustees (BOT).
- People visiting the cemetery (attending Cantor Cohn's funeral, May 2022).
- The popularity of the cemetery committee's weekly meetings (See Topic #2 below).

-Emanuel Cemetery Committee:

Judy Brown, Joyce Flescher, Meyer Frankel, Alan Goodman, Faith Helene, Peter Mehlman, Don Miller, Joanne Pasternack, Jeff Rudolph, Jay Smith and Karen Piacenta.

-Cemetery Committee Chairperson – Meyer Frankel (since January 1, 2018) reports to the Synagogue's Executive Director.

-Cemetery Administrator – Karen Piacenta (hired December 1, 2021) (Synagogue employee, paid from cemetery funds) reports to the Cemetery Committee Chairperson.

2. Next Full Cemetery Committee Zoom Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 14, 2022 at 7:30 PM.

Also, the Cemetery Committee conducts weekly cemetery Zoom meetings:

- With a maximum of 5 attendees.
- Karen, Jeff and Meyer attend each weekly meeting with two members of the cemetery committee and/or guests (Michael Kamins, Reesa Olins, Kathy Hart).
- These weekly meetings occur 3 times a month.
- These smaller weekly meetings are very popular with the Cemetery Committee members and gives the Cemetery Committee members an opportunity to better know Karen Piacenta (hired December 2021) and each other.

3. Annual services at the Cemetery: Scheduled Sunday October 2, 2022, Time 1:45 PM, the Sunday between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

- Placing speakers throughout the cemetery: Ed Glazer (has been contacted).
- Podium (US Cemetery, LLC) placement at the eastern edge of the little traffic circle (US Cemetery, LLC).
- 80 Yizkor books at the cemetery (Peter Mehlman / Karen Piacenta).
- Rabbi Small and Hazzan Risman will lead the service.

4. New Contract with US Cemetery, LLC:

- One year contract signed (July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023).
- US Cemetery LLC, is raising their prices 30% over the next two years.
- Note: US Cemetery, LLC is the only company in the Hartford area providing Jewish cemetery services (confirmed by Weinstein's Funeral Home and Hebrew Funeral Association - Len Holtz).**

5. Emanuel Cemetery to raise prices January 1, 2023: We plan to notify the congregation so that they can purchase cemetery plots before the price increases. **There will be a formal presentation of our cemetery price increases and a vote at the September 14, 2022 Cemetery meeting.**

Cost of a Plot:

Member: 2022 = \$1,800 increased to **\$2,500 (2023).**

Non-member: 2022 = \$3,600 increased to **\$5,000 (2023).**

Cost of Interments:

Member: 2022 = \$1,925 increased to **\$3,000 (2023).**

Non-member: 2022 = \$3,850 increased to **\$6,000 (2023).**

Steps for approval:

-Cemetery Committee at the September 14, 2022 meeting.

-Then at a BOT meeting.

Note: Our price increases are competitive with Hartford area Jewish cemeteries (Beth El, Beth David, Beth Israel, Beth Hillel, etc.)

Note: The Emanuel Synagogue Cemetery has not had a price increase for about 10 years.

6. Power Washing Cemetery Grave Markers (Monuments and Footstones).

Contractor: US Cemetery, LLC

Status: In Progress:

Cemetery Sections 1, 2, 3 and 7 (directly across from the chapel building) completed July 2022 Cost: \$21,765.

Next: Section 6 and Section 4.

7. Search for Cemetery Computer Software:

-Recently, July 2022, we got a price quote for the CemSites software: Cost \$11,900 upfront and \$2,400 maintenance fee per year.

Note: Part of the "upfront cost" is loading the CemSites database with the Emanuel Cemetery data (from our Excel Spreadsheets).

Note: If we go with CemSites or any software, we would want to place other cemetery records (i.e., Plot Deeds) into the cemetery software, which would be done at an additional cost.

Note: 07-27-2022, Karen contacted a Jewish cemetery that uses CemSites, Beth Shalom Memorial Gardens in Memphis, Tennessee. They have 5 to 20 funerals a year, one year experience with CemSites and have a bare bones package with them. It costs \$5,400 and \$945 maintenance per year.

Also, Beth Shalom charges for plots: \$5,000 for members and \$7,000 for non-members.

Next step: Meet with ShulCloud for an overview and a demo of ShulCloud's Cemetery Portal.

Note: ShulCloud's Synagogue Management software is used by the Emanuel Synagogue and, therefore, ShulCloud Cemetery Portal is free (no cost to purchase).

Also, ShulCloud's Synagogue software and ShulCloud's Cemetery Portal software use the same database.

Note: ShulCloud's Cemetery Portal Software does not have as many cemetery features as its competitor CemSites software, and ShulCloud does not plan to upgrade its Cemetery Portal anytime in the near future.

Note: By January 1, 2023 the Cemetery Committee should decide on one of the following options:

-CemSites

-ShulCloud Cemetery Portal

-No Computer Cemetery Software at this time.

Note: Most, if not all, Hartford area Jewish Cemeteries do not have or use Computer Cemetery software. They all use their own in-house written routines (i.e., Excel Spreadsheets).

8. Find A Grave (FAG):

-Free App available 24 / 7 to anyone.

-Photos of all Emanuel Cemetery Grave Markers (Monuments and Footstones) to be placed on FAG.

-Emanuel cemetery grave locations to be placed on FAG (section, plot and grave).

Note: FAG's GPS feature is equal to the computer software's Grave Mapping function.

Note: Enthusiasts, and Peter Graber-Lipperman, so far have placed 85% of the 3,000 Emanuel grave markers' photos on FAG.

9. Emanuel Synagogue is now charging the cemetery \$3K per year for cemetery work done by its office/custodial staff and any other cemetery cost:

Note: For the past five or more years, the synagogue did not charge the cemetery.

-In November 2021, \$3,000 was withdrawn from the cemetery's checking account by the Synagogue, without permission and without notification to cemetery personnel and without any justification of the cost.

-The Cemetery Committee Chairperson was very upset with this unauthorized deduction from the cemetery account. He told Synagogue personnel (President, Rabbi and the Executive Director) how he felt.

-The Cemetery Committee Chairperson consulted with Cemetery Committee members and with Synagogue office personnel and they all felt the \$3K yearly cemetery charge seemed reasonable.

-After assurances from the Synagogue President, Rabbi Small and the Synagogue's Executive Director that the cemetery personnel will not again be ignored, the Cemetery Chairperson eventually accepted this \$3K yearly charge.

10. The reverification of cemetery records:

We plan to walk the cemetery again to match our cemetery records (Excel Spreadsheets) with the dates and names on the monuments and also verification of the Emanuel Cemetery grave locations (section, plot, grave).

11. Search for a Financial Broker to manage the Synagogue and the Cemetery investments:

Attendees at the March 2022 meeting: Michael Kamins (Synagogue Treasurer), Mickey Libbin (Chairperson Finance Committee) Ken Simon (Synagogue President), Meyer Frankel (Cemetery Committee Chairperson), Alan Goodman (Beth Hillel).

Brokers being considered:

- JCF (Jewish Community Foundation (Kathryn Gonnerman)
- Stifel's Mark Hammond (JCSO).
- Fidelity Investments (CD 3.4%).

Note: The Cemetery's treasury is divided into three parts: 1. Perpetual, 2. Operational, 3. Checking Account.

Note: A Cemetery Financial Report for the year (July 1, 2021 thru June 30, 2022) will be presented at the Wednesday, 09-14-2022 Zoom meeting at 7:30 PM.

12. Genizah (Burial of Religious Articles):

-The Synagogue library must be cleaned out to make room for the Children's Museum.
-It was noted that many of the library's religious books/articles may need to be deposited of (Genizah).

-We will wait and see how many library books need to be buried to justify a formal "Genizah" burial.

-Note: The last Genizah took place at the Emanuel Cemetery, August 7, 2019.

-Note: Rabbi Small requested a Genizah date of November 2022.

-Note: Cost to dig a two-plot size Genizah grave is about \$1,000.

-Note: We plan to have some sort of a cemetery marker for the Genizah grave.

13. Emanuel Cemetery Funerals:

Emanuel funerals is the number one priority and responsibility of the Emanuel Cemetery Committee:

-July 1, 2021 thru June 30, 2022 **23 funerals**

-July 1, 2020 thru June 30, 2021 **24 funerals**

-July 1, 2019 thru June 30, 2020 **31 funerals**

-July 1, 2018 thru June 30, 2019 **29 funerals**

Note: Managing funerals, we interact with funeral home directors, grave diggers (US Cemetery, LLC), clergy and the deceased's families.

14. Other Cemetery Topics:

-Security Cameras for the Emanuel Cemetery:

--Researching for a cheaper more feasible solution, i.e., Wireless Security Camera Systems.

-Updating the Cemetery Rules and Regulations Booklet:

--Eliminating the 30-day grace period for interments for members

-Cemetery roads: Currently filling pot-holes and eventually there will be a need for very costly repaving.

-The legal separation of the Cemetery from the Synagogue.

-Cemetery's Problem Resolution Form: The tracking of cemetery issues, complaints, requests, problems, etc.:

--Since November 2021 we have had over 100 Problem Resolution Forms completed.
--A monthly report summarizing the cemetery issues, is presented by the Cemetery Administrator, Karen Piacenta.

Respectfully submitted,

Meyer Frankel,

Cemetery Committee Chairperson