

# **TOWN OF BELLINGHAM MASSACHUSETTS CEMETERY RULES AND REGULATIONS**

These regulations have been amended by the Bellingham Cemetery Committee and Sextons on September 30, 2021.

(The Proposed Revision – hearing 7/26/2022 are noted in Red Text on pages 4 thru 6)

## **I. Gravesite Sales and Ownership**

1. Gravesites and Columbarium Niches at Cemeteries under the control of Bellingham Cemetery Committee and Sextons will only be sold to:
  - a. Existing residents of the Town of Bellingham
  - b. Past residents of the Town of Bellingham
  - c. Family members of individuals whose remains are interred in Cemeteries under the control of the Bellingham Cemetery Committee and Sextons.
2. The DPW will print and issue deeds for gravesite and columbarium niche sales. The DPW is only authorized to issue deeds and sell gravesites and columbarium niche to town residents and former town residents. A vote of the Committee is required for any gravesites or columbarium niche sale to non-residents is approved.
3. All deeds are considered legal if signed by a majority of the Cemetery Committee, its authorized agent, or the DPW Director or his authorized agent.
4. A single individual can purchase one (1) to four (4) gravesites, if available, by completing an application and paying the fee (land and perpetual care). If an individual wishes to purchase more than four (4) gravesites, they should submit a written request to the Cemetery Committee. The Committee will act on requests for over four (4) gravesites at their regularly scheduled meetings.
5. A single individual can purchase one (1) columbarium niche, if available, by completing an application and paying the fee. If an individual wishes to purchase more than one (1) columbarium niche, they should submit a written request to the Cemetery Committee. The Committee will act on requests for more than one columbarium niche at their regularly scheduled meetings.
6. A single gravesite can be used to intern no more than the following:
  - a. One Casket and two urns, or
  - b. Six urns
7. A single columbarium niche can be used to intern as many two (2) urns. Niche owners are solely responsible for purchasing urns that will allow two urns to fit within the area inside the niche.

8. Gravesite and Columbarium Niche Deeds cannot be sold between private parties or transferred outside of the private owner's family without the endorsement of the Committee.
9. The Committee has no obligation to buy back unused graves or columbarium niches. Upon request from a grave or niche owner to sell back the grave or niche the Committee will vote whether to buy back the unused grave or niche. Any grave or niche owner submitting such a request to sell back a grave or niche must deliver to the Committee a signed copy of the deed and other documentation that clearly defines the exact location of the grave or niche and the purchase price paid at the time of purchase. The Committee may at times approach grave owners to see if they are willing to sell back graves if it is deemed in the Town's best interest to do so. Grave owners are under no obligation to sell back graves to the Town. In any case when the Committee elects to buyback a grave or niche the buyback price shall be no more than the amount paid by the grave or niche owner at the time the owner purchased the grave or niche.

## **II. Work at and Access to Town Cemeteries**

1. Only Town personnel or Town hired contractors are allowed to perform any work on Town cemeteries.
2. The gates to Town Cemeteries will be closed on or about January 2nd and reopened on or about March 31st annually.
3. The opening of graves for internment will be suspended for the months of December, January, February and March.

## **III. Gravesite Decorations, Markers, and Monuments**

1. The planting of trees, shrubs or bulbs in the ground is not permitted. Any plantings may be removed at the discretion of the Town without notice.
2. Gravesite decorations are only allowed in the Decoration Area. The Decoration Area is the space directly in front of the gravestone and extends from the face of the gravestone twelve inches (12"). There is no Decoration Area for Flat Markers.
3. The Decoration Area is on both front and back for gravestones in the four family grave areas where gravestone is surrounded by graves of one family.
4. Planting flowers and placing objects are allowed in the Decoration Area with the following limitations:
  - a. Flower beds, with peat moss, bark mulch & decorative stones less than 1" diameter are allowed.
  - b. No large rocks, large bark chips, etc. is allowed.

5. No gravesite or Decoration Area enclosures or borders of any kind are allowed. Any such that are placed may be removed at the discretion of the Town without notice.
6. No decorations that include moving (animated) parts are allowed. No pinwheels, spinning bird wings, etc. are allowed. Any such that are placed may be removed at the discretion of the Town without notice. (Small flags are allowed and are not considered moving or animated.)
7. Temporary decorations and markers must be durable, suitably anchored, and easily removable. Temporary decorations become the property of the Town as soon as they are placed and can be removed or modified at any time without notice. The Town will remove all decorations annually after January 2<sup>nd</sup> and before March 31<sup>st</sup>.
8. Memorial Lights and candles will be allowed and will not be annually removed, but as with any temporary decoration, the Town reserves the right to remove or modify these memorials should they become unsightly or a nuisance to maintenance efforts.
9. Permission must be received from the Town before any raised monuments are installed. The Town has sole discretion in establishing the location and orientation of monuments and markers.
10. The maximum dimensions for granite monuments for gravesite lots are as follows:

<b>Grave Lot</b>	<b>Dye</b>	<b>Height</b>
Single Grave Lot	2'-10" x 1'-2"	3'-0"
Two Grave Lot	3'-2" x 1'-2"	3'-0"
Three Grave Lot	3'-10" x 1'-2"	3'-2"
Four Grave Lot	4'-6" x 1'-2"	3'-2"
Five or Six Grave Lot	6'-4" x 1'-2"	3'-2"

11. No items or decorations are allowed on the Columbarium. Any such items placed may be removed at the discretion of the Town without notice.
12. All Columbarium Cover engraving will be done by the Town approved contractor and with font and size of text approved by the Committee to maintain a consistent appearance.
13. The Information engraved on a Columbarium Cover must at a minimum include the full name, date of birth, date of death of any individual interned there in. Additional information, and terms of endearment, will be allowed within the limitations of engraving text size and font as determined by the Committee.
14. The Committee may sell space on the end of the Columbarium for engraving as they see fit. Typically, this space will be used to inscribe the name of individuals whose cremation ashes that have been spread. Applications for engraving on the end of the Columbarium must be submitted to the Committee in writing. The fee for such engraving shall be as noted in Section V Fees and Charges. All Columbarium end engraving will be done by

the Town approved contractor and with font and size of text approved by the Committee to maintain a consistent appearance.

#### **IV. Internment**

1. Sealed covered vaults must be provided for all casket burials. The Town does NOT provide casket vaults. All urn burials will be placed in vaults provided by the Town.
2. All buried remains will be marked with a permanent marker provided by the Town and paid for at the time of Interment Order Application. This marker will be a flat gray granite marker measuring approximately 6" by 12" with the name of the interned, date of birth and date of death.
3. All Columbarium Niches will be marked with an engraving font and size determined by the Committee. The Town will perform and charge for engraving at the time purchase identifying the owner of the niche and modification as needed at the rate set by the Committee.
4. A minimum of 16 working hours notice is required from the time of application of an internment order to the time of burial.
5. No burials or Columbarium Niche openings will be scheduled on the following holidays that are observed by the Town employees:
  - a. Full Day Holidays: New Years Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, President's Day, Patriots Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving and the day after Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day.
  - b. Half Day Holidays: Good Friday (half day), the day before Thanksgiving, the day before Christmas, the day before New Years Day. (The holiday begins at 11:00 AM on half day holidays.)
6. Any burial scheduled such that any Town employee is required to perform tasks outside of regular working hours will include additional Interment Overtime Charge. The following are the parameters that determine when the Interment Overtime Charge will be applied:
  - a. Any internment scheduled on a weekend,
  - b. Any internment scheduled for Monday morning for which the DPW was not notified before Noon on preceding Friday.
7. All interments scheduled for week days must arrive at the Cemetery by 2:00 PM and all services must be completed by 2:30 PM or an Interment Extended Service Charge will be applied.
8. No remains will be interned until and unless a Gravesite Deed has been issued and Interment Order has been received with all related fees paid.

9. Any columbarium niche opening scheduled such that any Town employee is required to perform tasks outside of regular working hours will be charged at the DPW Off Duty Hours rate as set by the Committee. The following are the parameters that determine when the DPW Off Duty Hours will be applied:
  - a. Any interment scheduled on a weekend,
  - b. Any interment scheduled for Monday morning for which the DPW was not notified before Noon on preceding Friday.
10. All interment (earth burial or niche) scheduled on a weekend must arrive at the Cemetery by 1:00 PM and all services must be completed by 2:00 PM. There are no exceptions. Effectively, the cemeteries are closed for interment after 1:00 PM on all weekend days.

11. Pet Remains Interment:

- A. Only cremated pet remains are allowable; No non-cremated pet interment is allowed.
- B. No graves shall be sold solely for the interment of pet remains.
- C. Cremated remains of pets once owned by an individual to be interned in Bellingham Cemeteries will be allowed to be placed with the individuals remains if:
  - i. Pet ashes are comingled with ashes of the human individual in the same urn.
  - ii. Pet ashes are in a separate urn that fits in the niche for columbarium interment.
- D. All engraving must be approved by the Cemetery Committee and Sextons.
- E. No additional lines of engraving with the pet's information will be allowed on grave markers for earth burials or on niche panels for columbarium interment. Monuments marking earth burials, which are purchased and installed at the grave owner's expense, are allowed to have reference to pets.

## **V. Disinterment**

1. A minimum of 72 working hours notice is required from the time of application of an disinterment order.
2. Disinterment can only be scheduled Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:00 AM and 2:00 PM, and not on any holiday observed by the Town employees. (See Section IV-5 above.)
3. Fee for disinterment of vault containing caskets is noted in Section VI, and does not include any lifting or relocating of the vault.

## **VI. Fees and Charges**

### **Description**

### **Amount**

#### **GRAVE AND NICHE PURCHASE**

Gravesite Land Purchase Price	\$150.00 per gravesite
Gravesite Perpetual Care	\$150.00 per gravesite

Columbarium Niche Purchase Price	<del>\$400.00</del> <del>(\$600.00)*</del> per niche
Columbarium Niche Cover All Engraving -	\$250.00 at time of purchase

\*Effective Thursday 8/4/2022-3 PM

#### **INTERMENT – REGULAR DPW HOURS**

Earth Burial - Casket	<del>\$600.00</del> <del>(\$800.00)</del> per casket interment
Earth Burial – Urn (includes Vault)	<del>\$400.00</del> <del>(\$600.00)</del> per urn interment
Columbarium Niche Interment - Urn	\$100.00 per Niche Opening

Interment Order (Infant)	ZERO Dollars
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#### **DISINTERMENT – REGULAR DPW HOURS**

Vault containing casket	\$1,000.00 per disinterment
Urn (Niche)	\$100.00 per Urn
<u>Urn (Buried)</u>	\$400.00 per Urn
Infant	Zero Dollars

#### **ADDITIONAL CHARGES:**

#### **ADDED TO CHARGES NOTED ABOVE**

#### **DPW OVERTIME – WEEKENDS, HOLIDAYS, AFTER 2:30 PM (M-F)**

Earth Burial – (Urn or Casket)	\$400.00 per interment
Niche Opening	\$200.00 per opening
Extended Service Charge	\$200.00 per half hour

#### **OTHER ITEMS**

Columbarium End Engraving	\$100.00 per Two Lines of Text
Veteran Marker Installation	Zero Dollars
Monument Foundation Location Staking	Zero Dollars