

CITY OF BERLIN
OAKWOOD CEMETERY BOARD MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY AUGUST 20, 2025 - 6 P.M.
CITY CONFERENCE ROOM

1. Call to order/ Roll Call: Nancy Gimenez called the August Oakwood Cemetery Board meeting to order at 6:00pm. Board members present were Erdmann, Gimenez, Blazel, LaBuda and Beyer, and liaison member Melissa Sorenson. Board members absent were Seaman and Lichtfuss. Staff in attendance were Brittani Majeskie, Deputy Clerk-Treasurer and Joe Drover, Cemetery Sexton. There was a Quorum.

2. General Public Comments: Meeting was open to the public. Carol Frank spoke regarding the Doll Garden. She explained that Margaret Doll donated \$5,000 to be used for beautification of the cemetery. A memorial garden in her honor was made, costing about \$4,000. It looked nice at the time, but doesn't now. Frank has concerns about dying or dead trees, and the bench looking rusted out, making it difficult to read the name. She would like to see new plants, trimmed shrubbery, and annual mulch.

3. Minutes from 7/23/25 meeting: The minutes from the July 23, 2025 meeting were reviewed. A motion by Erdmann to accept the minutes with a second by Blazel. Voice vote carried.

4. Financial Report: The financial report was reviewed. Majeskie made note of a \$2,500 payment to Lighting Squad for a deposit towards the chapel lighting project.

1. Follow up of new money market account: Majeskie explained that Deb contacted David Stone, the representative from Edward Jones on 8/1. He didn't get back to her, so she called on 8/18. He said he needs an organizing document which establishes who oversees the money. Deb contacted her contact at Farmer's and Merchants on 8/18 to get the paperwork. Erdmann suggested that Section 1 of the Cemetery Rules and Regulations establishes authority. Sorenson explained other boards she is on have had to provide minutes showing the election of officers. Erdmann asked the Clerk's office to clarify with David Stone. Majeskie advised that Deb was out for the rest of the week. Discussion on how much to be moved to the money market account. The previous motion said half of the account, but Majeskie wanted clarification if this was before or after payment of the lighting project. A motion by Mary Kay Blazel to take \$20,000 from checking and move to a money market account at Edward Jones was made with a second by Beyer. Voice vote carried.

5. Old Business

1. Chapel Lighting work

a. Updated quote: Gimenez shared the new Lighting Squad quote of \$10,000. She explained that when they receive the check and the quote is approved, they will order supplies. They are tentatively looking to begin work at the end of September. Carol Frank suggested tree trimming around the chapel before light installation. Gimenez will reach out to local tree trimming professionals for quotes and additional information.

b. Electrical outlet update: Drover confirmed that electrical work could be completed in a day. Gimenez stated she would like to see a newspaper article about the completed lighting project. Erdmann suggested contacting Paul Weigel from the newspaper to write the article.

2. Cemetery Trees: Gimenez stated that she would be looking into Bloch's Farm for any sales, especially to get species not on the tree list. She asked if anyone sees anything to let her know as she would like to increase the types of trees in the cemetery.

a. Fall planting of trees: Gimenez explained that there are currently three trees purchased at Marty's Blue Sky Nursery. Drover confirmed fall planting takes place around October. Gimenez noted an error in the tree list- There was a Tulip tree mislabeled. Ranger Tree Service was notified and changes made and corrected copy provided to Gimenez. She asked who needs copies of the list. Discussion to get a list to Scott Zabel and the City Administrator.

b. Doll garden trees: Gimenez suggested the dying/dead trees be removed this fall. The Cemetery currently has a red bud tree, and asked Carol Frank if she thought that would look nice in the Doll Garden. Carol said it would be beautiful there. Gimenez ask who we talk to about fixing the bench in the Doll Garden. Gimenez and Drover will take a look at the bench condition.

3. Urban Forestry Grant update: Gimenez explained that she spoke with the DNR grant specialist regarding both the start up and regular grants that are available. The grant specialist noted that Berlin applied in 1993 and again in 2003, but that was prior to the start up grant existed, and that particular grant can be used up to 3 times. However after discussion with the City Administrator and Scott Zabel they noted that the City of Berlin applied and received the start up grant in 2024 and 2025, and hoped to use it and the regular grant for future tree work throughout the city, so Oakwood Cemetery will not be pursuing either of these grants at this time.

4. Level 1 Arboretum update

a. Tree identification tags update

b. Application update: Gimenez explained that the grant cannot be submitted yet as the trees need to be identified and labeled first. She would like to work on labels in the fall and winter, before spring. Gimenez presented a tree identification list with the common and scientific name of each tree, and the year planted moving forward. Erdmann asked if FFA students could help with the tagging of trees. Gimenez stated she will need to purchase wire and/or nails and springs to apply tree labels.

c. Arbor Day event-2026: Gimenez explained that since there is no forestry grant, the event could be scaled back. Some activities could include: a forester talk about the trees, or a self-guided tree walk with map. Potential dates of 4/25/26 and 5/2/26 are options close to Arbor Day. Gimenez suggested buying trees through Arbor Day and giving those away. She stated that Thrivent Action Funds in the amount of \$250 could be a possibility. Erdmann suggested that Green Lake County might support, such as the Country Conservation or Land Office. She also suggested that there may be state funds and to contact Representative Alex Dallman. Discussion on inviting local Scout and 4H groups. Gimenez asked if an oak tree could

be planted in the right-hand side of the front lawn upon cemetery entry. She suggested since the cemetery is named Oakwood, it would be nice to have an oak tree. Discussion about leaving that space open intentionally. Erdmann stated a tree cannot be placed there because there was a stipulation of Griffith to keep an open sightline from the road to the chapel.

5. Headstone Presentation by Dan Freimark: This will be on hold until Spring.

6. New Business

1. Review Oakwood Cemetery Rules and Regulation and Fee schedule documents:

Will be tabled to the September meeting.

2. Deep clean of chapel interior/ routine cleaning: Gimenez stated that if we plan on events, the chapel will need to have a deep clean as plaster is continuously falling down. Discussion that only sections of bad plaster were replaced. Discussion questioning a plaster sealer. Discussion questioning if the City Janitor can clean the chapel. Drover confirmed he has a shop vacuum and can vacuum plaster, but cannot go in and deep clean. Labuda mentioned that John Setter would shampoo, but no regular cleaning had been done in the past. Gimenez asked if the City Janitor could clean the chapel on a routine schedule. Erdmann said she would ask the City Administrator.

3. Grant opportunities

a. **Jeffris Heartland Fund:** Gimenez explained that this grant will assist with the creation of a historic structure report. The grant covers 50% and doesn't have a timeline. We would need to pursue historic registration of the chapel. Erdmann presented information on eligibility for the National or State Register of Historical places. She explained that it is a long and expensive process, requires documentation of a lot of information, and could take months. She suggested it may not be worth the effort.

b. **DAR Historic Preservation Grant:** Gimenez presented that this grant has a maximum of \$10,000, is 1:1 matching, and covers historical preservation of buildings, documents, artifacts, and headstones, and is due Oct. 31. Discussion on re-electrifying the chimes and how they were once fixed, but only worked for a short time. Discussion on monument repair. Drover stated that tipping monuments often need foundation repair, and it is less costly than monument repair. He said in the past it was approximately \$1,500-\$1,800 to repair 8 foundations, and they are still doing well. Labuda said that previous boards would set aside a specific amount for foundation repair and fix what they could, alternating between Reinke and Twin City Monuments. Discussion about monument repair being more visual as tipped monuments makes it appear as though the cemetery isn't receiving care. Drover estimated that 10 monuments are severely tipped. He will call both Reinke and Twin Cities to schedule estimates.

7. Sexton report: Drover said there is nothing to report at this time. Gimenez reminded a report of the number of burials to be presented at the last meeting in October.

8. Adjourn: Erdmann made a motion to adjourn the meeting with a second by Gimenez. The motion was carried by voice vote. Meeting adjourned at 7:14pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Brittani Majeskie, City of Berlin Deputy Clerk-Treasurer