

**CITY OF PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE
COMMITTEE FOR CEMETERIES**



**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2026
1 JUNKINS AVENUE, PORTSMOUTH, NH 03801**

For the Zoom recording:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=54UxwFPaMhY>

MINUTES

1. Call to Order and Roll Call:
2. Attending: Dee Dee Forte, Chair (via Zoom), Celeste Brooks, Steve Buzzell, Michael Griffin, Peter Splaine, Sue Polidura, Brighid Brady, Tara Rix, Amy Dutton, Jennifer Merriam. Staff: Stephanie Seacord (recording secretary). Excused: Corin Hallowell. Guest: John Chagnon (Proprietors Cemetery Trustee)
3. Approval of the Minutes of the December 4, 2025 Cemetery Committee Meeting on a motion by Polidura, seconded by Brooks.
4. City Website features – Stephanie Seacord
 - Cemetery Page Content – each of the historic cemeteries now has its own page, including an image gallery. Buzzell will supply additional images.
 - Rack card – Seacord will adjust the map so it is not cut off at the bottom and then print another 1000 cards to distribute at City Hall, the Library, Senior Center, Portsmouth Historical Society and Strawberry Banke Museum.
 - Historical markers for Cotton and Hall – Committee agreed that historical markers like the ones at North Cemetery and Point of Graves are desired for Hall and Cotton. More information is needed for each. Agreed that the Cotton marker should cover all of the cemeteries, public and private at that location, with a map detailing each section. Griffin will work with Seacord to supply historical background and noted the Wreaths Across America event placed nine wreaths on the graves of Revolutionary War and Medal of Honor veterans.
5. Cemetery List of ToDos – Dee Forte. Combined the review of 2026 projects with “ToDo” list – Dee Forte
 - a. Point of Graves – Corin Hallowell was unable to attend but Seacord reported he would provide an update on the project at the March meeting.
 - b. Forte reported that the Union and North Cemetery iron work is on the “To Do” list generated with Sue Sterry and Eva Boice and reported she is creating a spreadsheet to record updates and new initiatives. In answer to the question, Seacord reported that the North Cemetery seawall reconstruction project was completed last summer.

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6. Headstone work in Cotton – Steve Buzzell. No work due to the snow cover and cold.
7. Langdon DAR Marker and ceremony – Forte has been in communication with Caroline Langdon that the marker placement is approved and to schedule a small ceremony in the spring.
8. “Serve with Liberty” on May 8 & 15, 2026 – Forte confirmed that these dates are confirmed and Liberty Mutual will provide teams of 9-12 workers to repaint the railings at North and Union, weather-permitting, or work on headstone cleaning. She will ask Liberty Mutual to supply a letter to that effect for the Committee to present to City Council.
9. Election/Re-election of the Chair – On a motion by Buzzell seconded by Forte the committee voted to re-elect Dee Forte as chair and to table further discussion of a co-chair to the next meeting. Rix offered to provide backup as needed but not to serve as co-chair.
10. Other Business
 - Neale headstone -- A descendant of Thomas Ayers Neale emailed the City requesting assistance with his broken slate headstone. Buzzell agreed to investigate whether the missing piece is perhaps buried nearby in North Cemetery and if it can be repaired. Otherwise, the family would be responsible for replacing the headstone.
 - Meeting Materials – Brooks asked that future Agendas and Meeting Packets be sent to the Committee by the Monday/Tuesday prior to the meeting.
11. Public Comment – None.
12. Adjourn at 4:46 pm on a motion by Polidura seconded by Griffin.