



REPORT

To: Electoral Area Directors Committee

Report Number: CS-EADC-001

From: Kari Bondaroff, Environmental Services Manager

Date: June 8, 2020

Subject: Grounds Maintenance of Cemeteries within the Peace River Regional District

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Electoral Area Directors Committee receive the report titled "Grounds Maintenance of Cemeteries within the Peace River Regional District", dated June 8, 2020 for discussion.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

On September 19, 2019, the Regional Board passed the following resolution:

MOVED, SECONDED, and CARRIED

That the Electoral Area Directors Committee be provided with a report on options for the Regional District to operate and maintain cemeteries in the Peace Region when local community groups can no longer look after them, and further, that the report identify process, legislation requirements, budget implications, work load, and department responsibility.

On May 21, 2020, the Rural Budgets Administration Committee passed the following resolution:

MOVED, SECONDED, and CARRIED

That the Rural Budgets Administration identify the cost for the PRRD to conduct lawn maintenance for rural cemeteries in the Peace Region comparing it to the cost of providing grants to cemetery organizations for similar work; further, that the report be brought back to a future Electoral Area Directors Committee.

There are 31 rural cemeteries located in the PRRD. Staff have been conducting research on what would be required for the PRRD to operate, develop and maintain rural cemeteries. This would include grounds maintenance, internments, record keeping and budget impacts.

Service Function

In 1993, the Regional Board converted the Supplementary Letters Patent Dated October 29, 1987 to Bylaw No. 839, 1993 to include Electoral Areas B, C, D and E as participants and contribute financial aid toward the cost of operating, developing and maintaining cemeteries.

If the PRRD was to begin operating, developing and/or maintaining cemeteries directly, the Regional Board may have to establish new individual service areas for each cemetery. Establishing new service areas would require electoral assent.

Funding – Grants-In-Aid

Cemetery maintenance within Electoral Areas B, C, D, and E is funded through Function 285. Of the 31 rural cemeteries located in the PRRD, 11 have historically received grant funding from the PRRD. The following chart is a summary of rural cemeteries who received grant funding between 2015 and 2019.

Cemetery Name	Area	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Sunrise Valley & Mountainview Cemetery (Groundbirch)	E	\$1,300	\$1,300	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000
Tomslake Cemetery	D	\$1,200	\$1,200	\$1,200	\$1,200	\$1,200
Goodlow Community Club Cemetery	B		\$4,000			
Sunset Prairie Cemetery	E		\$1,200	\$1,200	\$1,200	
Willow Valley Cemetery	E		\$1,200	\$1,200	\$1,200	\$1,200
Rolla Cemetery Pioneers Bench	D			\$1,000	\$500	\$1,000
Flatrock Community Cemetery	B				\$1,656	\$684
Halfway Graham Community Cemetery	B				\$1,200	
Greunfeld Cemetery	D				\$856	
Rolla Cemetery Veterans Bench	D				\$500	
Sunken Graves Peace View Cemetery	D					\$500
Total Spent on Maintenance		\$2,500	\$8,900	\$5,600	\$9,312	\$5,584

Lawn Maintenance –Direct Budget Considerations

The following table outlines the estimated direct budget implications should the PRRD conduct lawn maintenance on behalf of 10 previously identified cemeteries listed above.

Note: The Halfway Graham Community Cemetery is inaccessible by vehicle, as such, has not been considered.

	Year One	Year Two	Budget Notes
Staff Wages	\$50,000	\$50,000	Includes 2 full time seasonal staff for 4 months.
Vehicle/Equipment Purchase	\$60,000	\$1,500	
Vehicle Use Allocation		\$20,000	Includes Use and Maintenance of Vehicles
Administration Costs	\$15,000	\$15,000	Insurance, WCB, phones, PPE, training, meals, etc
Total Cost	\$125,000	\$86,500	

Operational Considerations

It is estimated that it will take two seasonal staff a total of five 10-hour days to complete lawn maintenance work required for all 11 sites. Staff will have to attend each site a minimum of 12 times over the season to mow, whipper snip and complete garbage clean-up as required. Regular maintenance at a cemetery will take more time than at a park, because one has to mow around more obstacles and the standard of care is usually higher.

Administration Considerations

Administrative costs including staff wages and benefits are budgeted for under this function for grant administration. As the function increases in service level, the costs of administrative activities will increase.

Incomplete Information on Locations of Plots

Exploratory work into cemetery size, number of headstones, and land ownership and land agreement specifications will need to be conducted. The GIS department will need a minimum of 11 days to conduct this work. Further, maintenance agreements for each site will need to be developed.

Internments

If the PRRD was to begin operating, developing and/or maintaining cemeteries directly, the following considerations for internments will have to be considered:

- Capital costs:
 - Skid steer with necessary attachments = \$100,000
 - Additional vehicle, trailer, mower, etc. = \$100,000
 - Ongoing capital for columbariums, fencing, etc.
- GIS & Plotting
 - Developing mapping and plotting of current and future internments
 - Depending on the condition of records, the ground may need to be x-rayed to determine the location of internments.
- Staffing
 - If staff are responsible for internments, it will require shift changes to allow for work on weekends. This will either take staff away from other work scheduled in the week, or require additional staff to manage.

Other Work

- Establish a record system that meets regulatory requirements and convert existing records to the new record system.
- Establish a care fund (money for the ongoing care and maintenance).
- Develop regulatory and fees bylaws, policies and procedures and levels of service which will impact maintenance standards.
- Establish a Board of Trustees.
- Scheduling internments, answering questions, and general administration.

Grounds Maintenance - Winter:

Service levels will need to be established to determine whether sites will be plowed during the winter or only plowed when there is an internment.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:

1. That the Electoral Area Directors Committee provide further direction.

STRATEGIC PLAN RELEVANCE:

- ☒ Not Applicable to Strategic Plan.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION(S):

The PRRD also provides maintenance support through grant funding to the District of Chetwynd (\$30,000 annually) and the Village of Pouce Coupe (\$1,500 annually).

COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATION(S):

OTHER CONSIDERATION(S):