

TOWN OF SUPERIOR
Work Session
Thursday, May 19 2011 – 5:00pm
Superior Senior Center
360 W. Main St.
Superior, AZ 85173

OFFICIAL RECORD OF WORK SESSION

A. CALL TO ORDER:

Mayor Hing called the meeting to order at 5:05pm.

B. SALUTE TO THE FLAG:

Mayor Hing led the council, staff, and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

C. OPENING PRAYER:

Mayor Hing led the council, staff and audience in a brief word of prayer.

D. ROLL CALL:

Council Present: Councilmember Gutierrez (Arrived at 6:30), Councilmember Tomerlin, Councilmember Peralta, Councilmember Aguilar, Vice Mayor Lopez & Mayor Hing

Absent: Councilmember Heglie

E. WORK SESSION DISCUSSION:

1. Cemetery Policies, fees, guidelines and residency requirements.

Ms. Oliver explained that they have provided a copy of the current policies and procedures for the cemetery as well as some suggested changes to remedy some of the issues surrounding the cemetery.

Councilmember Aguilar asked if staff have contacted any of the surrounding communities. Mrs. Oliver reported that they have contacted several area communities and Superior still has lower rates & fees than most of the communities. Councilmember Peralta explained that those fee schedules and information should have been provided in the packet not just staff recommendations. Mrs. Oliver explained that it was provided in the packet the time fee schedule was presented to council.

Discussion followed on the Kearny cemetery and how a private entity handles the cemetery and the town is not involved in the operation. Councilmember Aguilar stressed how important this issue is to the community and that they have to make sure all costs are being covered.

Mr. Lucas the staff member who works at/on the cemetery provided a detailed discussion on what is needed to maintain the cemetery including the opening and closing of the graves. He explained that it is often difficult to hand dig the graves but it required when they cannot get

the back hoe into the grave area. He stated that the narrower the bucket the back hoe is the easier it is to dig the grave. Mayor Hing stated that it is important they understand the digging scenarios from the easiest to the hardest.

Councilmember Aguilar suggested that once the rates and policies and procedures are adopted they need to be put on the front page of the paper and well advertised. He stated they really needed to clarify and communicate what qualifies as a resident/non-resident. Discussion followed on the current exceptions for the non residents:

1. **Medical Care outside of Superior** – Person who died in a care facility outside of Superior but lived in Superior prior to being admitted to the care home.
2. **Call of Duty** – Ms. Oliver stated that this would be an active duty service member who died in the line of duty/overseas.
3. **College Student** – Ms. Oliver explained that if the deceased was enrolled in college and died away from Superior but their parents still lived in Superior they would be considered a resident.
4. **Jobs locate out of state**- Ms. Oliver explained that many families have a member of their family working in other communities but spouse/children still in Superior.

Mayor Hing explained that this has been a hot topic in the community and the community needs to provide input on this. He expressed concern that there has never been a reserve account to handle the maintenance or upkeep of the cemetery after all the plots are sold. He stated that he was surprised by the cost of the man hours to dig some of these graves where a pick and shovel are needed.

Councilmember Peralta commented that they still needed to determine definitions of a resident/non-resident. She suggested having one fee for both so we didn't have to define them.

Discussion followed on costs associated with those people who pre purchased their plots. Ms. Oliver stated that the town has to honor the fees that were paid as long as they have a proof of purchase. She said in some cases the open and close fees were also paid in advance and the town has to honor that payment as well and cannot charge additional fees for that.

Discussion followed on a particular burial of a man who was living and running a business in Queen Valley but had been from Superior and operated a several businesses in Superior and how many people really come here to be buried that do not have ties to Superior.

Ms. Oliver also reported that a mortuary in the valley has come and purchased several plots so they can offer plots to families who cannot afford plots in the valley. She also stated that the Town of Florence no longer allows non-residents to be buried in their cemetery because of the capacity issues.

Ms. Lira commented that maybe they could consider having a sponsorship plan where if you are a nontraditional resident who has ties to the community a local resident could sponsor the

burial by showing proof of residency. She also expressed concern that definitions for active duty service members should include the family members of that service member as well.

Discussion followed on the age of the cemetery, Mr. Lucas shared that there are graves in the cemetery that date back to 1911. He also stated that many of the maps are not up to date and they have found that some of the graves have been double and triple sold. He stated that there are companies that can do a scan and determine if a grave is already occupied. He explained that he has been told by several long time residents that areas of the cemetery already have occupants that the town shows as vacant. Discussion followed on the need to try and locate older maps of the cemetery from Mr. Smith.

Mayor Hing suggested setting up a sub board to review residency or qualification for residency rates so that way the manager is not the one making the decision. Ms. Oliver stated that if the policy is clear then there should not be any problems. She also stated that having a sub board could be more difficult because you would have to post for a quorum etc.

Vice Mayor Lopez expressed concern that there is no way to really figure out what should be a resident or non-resident. She suggested a flat fee.

Ms. Rabago suggested a tiered system that would give rates for residents, non residents with ties to the community and non residents with no ties to the community. She expressed concern that if they don't do something the cemetery will fill up if the fees are too low for both types of non residents.

Ms. Oliver explained that the break down in the policies occurred in 2010 when the town changed the rates. She said the new rates took effect on January 1, 2010 and a staff member had typed the new fees but created new policy regarding resident and nonresident from the 2003 policies and this is what let to overall confusion.

Ms. Oliver read the 2003 resident policy which said that the deceased had to have lived in Superior for 12 months prior to their death. She said the Council did not adopt a policy change only a fee schedule change.

She shared with the council the fee schedule from 2003 and the new fees adopted in 2010.

Fee Type:	2003 Resident	2003 Non Resident
Plot Fee	\$225.00	\$300.00
Open/Close	\$200	\$300

She stated that hand digging was billed at \$50.00 per hour.

Discussion followed on what was considered the surrounding areas to be part of the resident fees. It was discussed that it should just remain the incorporated town limits. Mayor Hing

suggested that this could be a benefit to entice the unincorporated areas around Superior to want to be annexed into the town limits.

Councilmember Aguilar suggested that the town look into having the mortuary manage and sell the plots that way the Town is not so involved with the sale of the plots.

Councilmember Peralta asked if there were laws that governed how cemeteries were supposed to operate.

Discussion followed on allowing people to dig their own graves, Ms. Oliver said that due to liability issues they could not allow that to happen.

Discussion followed on rates for the open and closing for cremation urns. Ms. Oliver explained that those fees are reduced and there is not a plot charge if they are buried in an existing plot.

Mayor Hing recapped some of the ideas on residency for the staff to review:

1. Sponsorship
2. 3 tier system
3. Have same price for open/close

Discussion followed on the increased rates for Saturday burials. Councilmember Peralta suggested that they just increase the plot price and not have a surcharge for Saturday burials. Another suggestion was to modify staff work time to accommodate a Saturday burial and not accrue overtime costs.

Mr. Lucas commented that he would like to see a policy created that does not allow for night or evening burials. He referred to a few that he did and he was concerned for the safety of those in attendance. He also said that he had been doing research on urn niches and other types of burial buildings.

It was discussed that there should be a separate account for the cemetery to collect fees and to keep revenues so they are only spent on cemetery maintenance.

Councilmember Gutierrez arrived and apologized for being late. He suggested that the council needed to determine if they wanted be okay with being in the negative on this operation, be cost neutral or make a profit. He said once that decision was made then that could determine the fees.

F. ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION: Councilmember Peralta made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Councilmember Tomerlin seconded the motion.

VOTE: The motion was approved unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 6:36pm

CERTIFICATION:

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Work Session of the Town Council of the Town of Superior held on the 19th day of May 2011. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

/s/

Melanie Oliver_____

Melanie Oliver
Town Clerk/Manager

These Minutes were compiled and transcribed by

Mila Lira

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*Final editing of these minutes and their content is completed and verified by staff members of the Town of Superior.