

Chapter 378

Oakdale Cemetery

[HISTORY: Adopted by the Board of Selectmen of the Town of Middleton 3-19-1991. Amendments noted where applicable.]

[Most recent amendments adopted by unanimous (5-0) vote of the Board of Selectmen at a remote meeting held on May 5, 2020]

§ 378-1 General provisions.

- A. The adoption and enforcement of the following rules and regulations are necessary to maintain good order within the Cemetery, to protect the interests of proprietors and to preserve the beauty of the grounds. All persons are urgently requested to report immediately any act of courtesy or other breach of propriety.
- B. The Cemetery Commission reserves the right to temporarily suspend or modify a regulation, but such act shall not be construed as affecting the general application or enforcement of such rule.
- C. The rules and regulations and schedule of prices as established by the Cemetery Commission are subject to change without notice.
- D. All provisions of MGL c. 114 shall be adhered to, including penalties for infringement of the law.
- E. The Superintendent of Public Works is in full charge of the Cemetery and is responsible for the enforcement of the rules and regulations and for maintaining the Cemetery in conformance with the principals to which it was dedicated.

§ 378-2 Cemetery hours.

- A. The gates of the Cemetery will be open daily from 8:00 a.m. to 8:30 p.m., except from November 1 to March 1, when they will close at 4:30 p.m.
- B. Any unauthorized person found within the Cemetery outside the prescribed opening hours will be deemed a trespasser and as such will be liable to prosecution.
- C. The term "gate" as used herein shall mean any or all the established entrances to the Cemetery, whether or not equipped with moveable barriers.

§ 378-3 Office hours.

All business related to the Oakdale Cemetery may be done through the Superintendent of Burials whose office is located at the Department of Public Works office, 195 North Main Street, during normal business hours, Monday through Friday, 7:00AM-3:00PM. The office is closed on all legal holidays and weekends. **[5-5-2020]**

§ 378-4 Sale of lots.

Sale of lots at Oakdale Cemetery shall be restricted to residents or former residents of the Town of Middleton, with the following restrictions to former residency purchases:

- A. Any former resident of the Town of Middleton must show satisfactory proof of former residency before said sale of lot and be restricted to the sale of no more than a two-grave lot. Satisfactory proof may include but is not limited to the personal knowledge of Public Works staff, birth or marriage certificate, tax or utility bill, or similar. **[5-5-2020]**
- B. Former residency purchases shall be subject to the fee structure established by the Board of

Selectmen/Cemetery Commissioners which may be adjusted from time to time. All graves are sold with perpetual care.

- (1) The fee structure is as follows:
 - (a) Single-grave lot: \$600.
 - (b) Double-grave lot: \$1,200.
 - (2) All other interment fees shall apply at the time of interment.
- C. Payment for sale of lots shall be payable to the Town of Middleton. The deed of a lot shall not be delivered, no stone or marker may be erected, and no work will be done on the lot until the purchase price is fully paid. **[5-5-2020]**
- D. A maximum of four graves may be purchased by any one household. Any requests for more than four graves must be first approved by the Board of Selectmen after a recommendation received in writing by the Superintendent of Public Works. **[Added 3-15-2016; amended 3-29-2016]**
- E. No lot or grave at the Oakdale Cemetery shall be sold to anyone who is not a current or former resident of the Town of Middleton at the time of such sale. **[Added 3-15-2016; amended 3-29-2016; 5-5-2020]**
- F. No lot or grave shall be sold to anyone who was a Middleton resident solely as a result of incarceration at any detention facility located in Middleton. **[5-5-2020]**

§ 378-5 Lots.

- A. Cemetery lots shall not be used for any other purpose than as a place of burial for the human dead, and all burials therein shall be under the personal charge of the Superintendent of Burials, to whom shall be paid such fees for opening a grave as shall be established by the Cemetery Commissioners.
- B. All lots will be defined by a suitable corner marker and numbered by the Department of Public Works, hereinafter referred to as the "Department," and it is unlawful for any person to remove or tamper with said marker.
- C. No lot will be deeded to more than one owner, nor will a lot be divided. No objections exist to an agreement between or among families as to the parts of the lots to be used by each, but the Department will not undertake to record or enforce such agreements.
- D. In case of the decease of a proprietor, it shall be the duty of the heirs or devisee to file with the Department satisfactory proof of ownership (MGL c. 114, § 29).
- E. If any monument or effigy or any structure whatsoever or any inscription is placed in or upon any lot which shall be determined by the Cemetery Commissioners to be improper or offensive, they shall have the right and it shall be their duty to instruct the Superintendent of Public Works to enter upon said lot and remove such improper or offensive objects.
- F. No fence, curbing, railing, wall, hedge, embankment, ditch or other lot enclosure shall, at any time, be erected or placed in or around any lot, and the establishment of the grade of any lot shall be subject to the approval of the Superintendent of Public Works, and the work of grading shall be done by employees of the Department.
- G. Residents purchasing new graves or lots must make said purchase in the section open for sale at that time, e.g., if purchase is for a two-grave lot, it must be made in the section and row being sold at that particular time. No exceptions will be made.

- H. No proprietor shall suffer the remains of any person to be interred within his lot for hire.
- I. All interments or other work shall be under the personal charge of the Superintendent or designee(s). **[5-5-2020]**
- J. No sale, transfer or assignment of any lot shall be valid without the approval of the Cemetery Commission.
- K. Proprietors may erect a memorial structure on their lot subject to the regulations set forth under **§ 378-11, Memorial structures.**
- L. Proprietors may cultivate plants on their lots subject to the approval of the Department, but if such planting becomes neglected or is deemed objectionable or detrimental, the Superintendent reserves the right to remove such planting. If done on lots under perpetual care, the owner must bear the expense of putting the ground in proper condition again.
- M. On lots or graves where no monument has been erected the sod under no condition shall be allowed to be broken.
- N. The Superintendent shall remove from lots and graves flowers or emblems whenever, in his opinion, the same have become so withered or decayed as to render their removal desirable. Floral emblems so removed will be put in a common dump and employees shall refuse to attempt to find them after they have been disposed of.
- O. The Cemetery Commission reserves the right to alter the plot of walks, avenues and unsold areas.
- P. No lights of any kind shall be allowed in the Cemetery.
- Q. Lot owners making improvements on lots that are under perpetual care will be charged with any necessary expense of putting lots in order, after such improvements are made.

§ 378-6 Trees and shrubs. [5-5-2020]

- A. If any trees or shrubs on any lot shall by means of their roots or branches, or otherwise, become detrimental to the adjacent lots, avenues or paths, or dangerous or inconvenient to passengers, it shall be the duty of the Department, for the time being, and it shall have the right to enter into said lot and remove said trees and shrubs or such part thereof as are thus detrimental, dangerous or inconvenient.
- B. No person shall trim or remove any tree or shrub, whether or not it is on his own lot. The Department will on request perform all such work at no cost.
- C. The Department will use constant care in examining trees, removing such parts thereof as appear to be dangerous or detrimental, but expressly disclaims responsibility for damage to either persons or property resulting from falling trees or parts thereof.

§ 378-7 Grounds.

- A. Operators of vehicles within the Cemetery must drive with care and at a low rate of speed because of poor visibility and sharp turns.
- B. On Memorial Day no vehicle except those accompanying and a part of a memorial procession will be allowed in the Cemetery before 12:00 noon.
- C. Motorcycles, bicycles, go-carts, three- or four-wheel all-terrain vehicles and snowmobiles are excluded from the Cemetery at all times.
- D. All persons are forbidden to injure or molest any bird or wild animal, or to molest its nest or other habitation.

- E. The taking of firearms into the Cemetery is forbidden except by authorized persons on military occasions.
- F. No tree or shrub shall be removed, except by the Department, and all persons are forbidden to gather flowers, either wild or cultivated, or to break or injure any tree, shrub or plant.
- G. No employee of the Department will be allowed to receive any fee or other compensation whatsoever for service rendered to any person.
- H. Persons within the Cemetery conducting themselves improperly will be requested to leave and upon refusal will be compelled to do so.
- I. Dogs and horses are not allowed in the Cemetery at any time.
- J. All work done within the Cemetery shall be performed by employees of the Department or by permission of and under the supervision of the Superintendent.
- K. No hunting is allowed within the Cemetery property and no vehicles are to be left unattended within Cemetery property for the purpose of hunting on adjacent properties. Vehicles found violating this regulation will be towed at the owner's expense.
- L. No private vehicles will be allowed to plow out the Cemetery roads at any time. Any damage done to stones and/or the grounds, roads, trees, shrubs, etc., will be at the expense of the violator of this subsection.
- M. The Department reserves the right to open the Cemetery at a reasonable time after any winter storm.
- N. All water faucets located in the Cemetery are to be used for the sole purpose of filling buckets/jugs with water for the caring of flowers and shrubs on one's lot. In no instance is a hose or sprinkler to be hooked up to these faucets. Care in making sure water faucets are completely shut down after use is requested. Any misuse or damage to these faucets should be reported immediately to the Department of Public Works office.

§ 378-8 Funerals.

All funerals must enter the Cemetery through the main gate and upon entering shall be under the charge of the Superintendent or designee(s). **[5-5-2020]**

§ 378-9 Interments.

- A. Undertakers are required to provide the Public Works Department with a minimum twenty-four (24) hour notice in advance of interment. Undertakers are required to have all interment orders signed by the proprietor or representative of a lot, or grave, and presented at the Department of Public Works office at least eight working hours before the time set for the interment. **[5-5-2020]**
- B. All interments must be made in permanent containers.
- C. The Department will receive telephone orders for opening a grave but disclaims liability of error in such cases. In no case will a grave which contains a body be opened until a properly signed order has been received and verified.
- D. No interment will be made without a regular order and burial permit.
- E. As the liability of error in names and dates is so great, undertakers must have all orders plainly and correctly written in ink. It is important that the proprietor should personally designate the grave to be opened in a multigrave site.
- F. No interment will be made until all fees charged for the same have been paid. There is an additional

charge for the interment of a nonresident. **[5-5-2020]**

- G. Not more than one interment will be permitted in any one grave site other than what is provided for under § **378-14**, Cremation, of these rules and regulations.
- H. Interments will not be made on Sundays. Interments on Saturdays and legal holidays will be charged extra. **[5-5-2020]**
- I. In case of emergency arising from extreme weather conditions or other cause beyond human control, or because of any other extenuating circumstances, the Superintendent may at his discretion postpone making a scheduled interment and shall deposit the body in the receiving tomb without charge until conditions permit interment.

§ 378-10 Receiving tomb.

- A. Bodies may be placed in the receiving tomb at any time, but the Superintendent reserves the right to remove and inter the body whenever it may be deemed necessary to do so. **[5-5-2020]**
- B. While bodies are deposited in the receiving tomb, the Superintendent is forbidden to allow any casket to be opened, except on written request from the immediate family of the deceased and in the presence of an undertaker. In no case will a casket be opened when in the opinion of the Superintendent the condition of the body is such as to render it improper.

§ 378-11 Memorial structures.

- A. Proprietors should consult with the Superintendent before placing orders for stonework, due to the fact that there are restrictions in various sections of the ground.
- B. All stonework must rest on a foundation of cement masonry which will be built by the Department. In no case will a foundation be built either in whole or in part over the remains of a previous interment.
- C. Applications for this work must be filed with the Department and shall give full particulars, including size.
- D. Monument Dimensions:
 - 1. In single-grave sections, monuments shall not exceed two feet, six inches (2' 6") long by one foot, zero inches (1' 0") wide at the base. The base shall not exceed eight inches (8") in height. The monument shall not exceed three feet, two inches (3'2") in overall height. **[5-5-2020]**
 - 2. On two-grave lots, monuments shall not exceed three feet, zero inches (3' 0") long by one foot, zero inches (1' 0") wide at the base. The base shall not exceed eight inches (8") in height. The monument shall not exceed three feet, two inches (3'2") in overall height. **[5-5-2020]**
 - 3. On four-grave lots, monuments shall not exceed three feet, seven inches (3' 7") long by one foot, one inch (1' 1") wide at the base. The base shall not exceed eight inches (8") in height. The monument shall not exceed three feet, two inches (3'2") in overall height. **[5-5-2020]**
 - 4. All other monuments other than headstones or headstones greater than the dimensions stated must first receive approval of the Cemetery Commission.
- E. No foundations will be constructed and no stonework will be set between November 15 and April 1, or when the ground is not in the proper condition for such work.
- F. No person shall deliver any material within the Cemetery except under the direction of the Superintendent or designee(s). **[5-5-2020]**

G. All work must be done during the normal working hours of the Cemetery. All contractors will be held responsible for the protection of other stones, paths, avenues, graves, trees and shrubs. [5-5-2020]

H. Definitions. As used in this section, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated:

FOOT STONE

A stone to mark the locations of a particular grave and shall be set at or below ground level at the foot of the grave. No more than one foot stone measuring no more than two feet, zero inches (2' 0") long by one foot, zero inches (1' 0") wide by eight inches (8") deep is allowed on each grave. [5-5-2020]

GRAVE MARKER

A one-piece stone set at one or all four corners of a lot to mark the location of a particular grave. Grave markers are prohibited in single grave lots. [5-5-2020]

HEADSTONE

A stone to mark the location of a particular grave and shall be erected at the head of the grave.

MONUMENT

Any memorial structure other than a tomb, mausoleum, headstone, foot stone or grave marker.

I. No raised letters or designs will be allowed on the base of any stonework where it can be damaged by grass-cutting implements.

J. No more than one headstone or monument will be allowed on any one lot.

§ 378-12 Perpetual care.

The term "perpetual care" shall mean the maintenance of the lot or grave in reasonable condition. This include cutting the grass at proper intervals, pruning trees and shrubs, raking and cleaning the grounds and raising the sunken graves. Under this agreement the Department does not bind itself to maintain, repair or replace any structure erected thereon, nor plant ornamental flowers or shrubs, nor to regularly water the grass or flowers.

§ 378-13 Disclaimer.

The Department of Public Works will take every reasonable precaution to protect the private property of lot and grave owners within the Cemetery from loss or damage, but it disclaims all responsibility for loss or damage from causes beyond its control, especially from the acts of thieves, vandals, malicious mischief makers and from the acts of Providence, including wind, hail, snow and frost.

§ 378-14 Cremations.

- A. Six cremations will be allowed per single grave where the right of burial has not been used. Since the Commission feels that cremations do not disturb the remains of a person already interred it will allow up to six cremations to be placed around the headstone area.
- B. Cremations must be placed in permanent containers when delivered to the Cemetery via parcel post.

§ 378-15 Fees.

[Amended 3-15-2016; 3-29-2016; 5-5-2020]

A. Grave openings:

- (1) Residents: \$700.
- (2) Nonresidents: \$2,000.

B. Weekend funeral or excavation:

- (1) Residents: \$1,400.
- (2) Nonresidents: \$2,500.

C. Cremation interment:

- (1) Residents: \$300.
- (2) Nonresidents: \$900.

D. Weekend cremation interment: \$200 in addition to regular interment fee

E. Foundations: \$200.

F. Flush markers: \$100.

G. Compressor for frost: \$100.

H. Single-grave lot: \$600.

I. Double-grave lot: \$1,200.

J. Four-grave lot: \$2,400.

K. In addition to lot costs there is an additional fee of \$5 for recording of deed.