2024 Budget Request

Request: Cemetery Software

Department: Corporate Services

Request ID: COR2024BUDGET-C-03

Financial Ask: $25,000

Funding Source: Capital – Mount Pleasant, Boyd, and Oxenden Cemetery

This document and its attachments are public and available in an accessible format upon request.

Background and Strategic Priority

In 2016, the Township assumed full operation and administration of 3 active cemeteries: Mount Pleasant, Oxenden, and Boyd.

Cemetery administration was previously completed by management boards which have since dissolved. This transition has presented challenges to record-keeping processes, which staff have been working diligently to resolve.

Introducing cemetery software is a continuation of the work completed to further compliance with cemetery records management throughout 2022. As approved in the 2023 budget cycle, the records management summer student completed the remaining digitization work to allow for import into a software solution.

Approval of this budget request achieves strategic goal #5 in the Township's 2020-2023 Strategic Plan to deliver effective and cost-efficient services by reducing the administrative time commitment required to locate plot information.

Analysis

Cemetery records must comply with section 99 of Ontario Regulation 30/11 (O. Reg 30/11) of the *Funeral, Burial, and Cremation Services Act, 2002*, beyond the requirements of municipal records governed by the *Municipal Act, 2001*.

In addition, section 110 of O. Reg 30/11 provides that the Township must have a publicly accessible register that includes information regarding each interment right. This information must be updated within 5 days and must be made available to the public for inspection without charge.

Introducing a cemetery software would ensure the public register is available 24/7 to members of the public via the Township's website, meeting the compliance requirements.

The Township's current register is managed in an inaccessible format and is available on request only. The Township is committed to making documents accessible, and integration of a cemetery software attains goal #5 as endorsed by Council in the 2024-2028 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

Furthermore, risk to the Township is reduced by ensuring records are accurate, and accessible, and plot sales are not duplicated because of unreliable records.

This software would lessen the staff time required to conduct a search of electronic and paper records, as well as reference maps. Staff spend significant time working with families and funeral homes to fill gaps in interment right records in collaboration with the Township's Cemetery Contractor, Owen Sound Vault Works. Conducting these searches come at a cost to the Township as they are beyond the scope of the contract and consume a significant amount of staff time to research. These searches must be completed in advance of any burial taking place and ensure legislated compliance. These costs would be significantly reduced by importing the map and records associated with plots into a software solution accessible by staff and the contractor.

Financial Impact

A one-time capital ask of $25,000 is being requested to obtain and import records and maps into the software. The software would be subject to an annual fee each year thereafter.

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	2024 Budget Request Cemetery Software.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Nov 17, 2023

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Samantha Buchanan, Treasurer

Niall Lobley, Director of Community Services