

# General Cemetery Committee Meeting



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HELD AT Committee Room, Council Chambers on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2015

Meeting opened – 5.30pm

## Present

Cr Sharon Tapscott (Chair)	Ray Alcock (Bemboka)	Wayne Dunning (Wolumla)
Peter Phillips (Eden)	Steve Nixon (Eden)	Nancy Grant (Wyndham)
Barbara Grant (Wyndham)	Shirley Carter (Bermagui)	Neridah Holzhauser (Bermagui)
Tex Pena (Bemboka)		
Simon Schweitzer (BVSC Community Services Manager)	Karen Terwin (BVSC Cemetery & Committees Liaison Officer)	Jackie Grant (BVSC Cemetery & Committees Liaison Officer)

### 1 Apologies:

Darragh Reynolds (Eden)

### 2 Confirmation of minutes

Minutes from the 17 February 2015 General Cemetery Committee Meeting were confirmed.

Moved - Ray Alcock

Second - Shirley Carter

### 3 Questions to Finance Department Representative.

Meeting was suspended at this point to allow Lucas Scarpin BVSC Group Manager Strategy & Business Services Group CFO to answer questions from the committee regarding finance issues, Lucas noted that Pankaj Nepal BVSC Finance Manager is out of the country at present so some issues may have to wait until his return –

**The main question raised by the committee was around the monies that are being held in reserve** – Any money held by the cemetery committees is held in reserve, this is reported as one cemetery reserve to Council. Internally this is tracked by cemetery, a breakdown of these reserves will be provided to committees annually. BVSC will provide an initial breakdown on Pankaj's return. The funds held by Council are held in reserve and are quarantined and can only be accessed with a resolution through Council.

**Are fixed asset purchases passed through** – Council has a General Ledger system which is reported to Council, underneath that there are what we call work orders for each cemetery. Every transaction for each cemetery is passed through its relevant work order; any capital expense is passed through this work order and then balanced off at the end of the financial year. From 2016 the cemeteries will be largely self-reliant and should not need to draw on Council funds.

Concern was raised that the committees have not been able to track or see how much money they have in surplus for budgeting etc. – this is pretty simple, Council has this information and the breakdowns of every transaction for every cemetery.

If any cemetery has a positive balance at the end of the year, that is moved into reserve and quarantined. This does not go into general cemetery funds but remains under that particular cemetery.

Monies held in trust for Burial Licences are held in the same account but Council can identify through the work orders and tasks attached to these how much of this is to be held for those licences. This breakdown will also be provided along with the reserve breakdown.

Issue was raised again around the statements that are given to the committees only showing the information of the person who is invoiced and not the deceased. BVSC will look into adding a column to this report to identify the deceased.

**Why is the money handed over for Burial Licences not treated as revenue** – Firstly if it is held in trust it would be illegal to use. It has to be held in case we are called on it, in case it needs to be refunded. It is bought in as revenue then transferred out into reserves, so it will look like revenue for that year.

**Is the interest from those accounts credited to the committees** – We will have to look into this. Council by law can only have one bank account, which is why the committee funds had to be bought back in under Council. Reserve balances are looked at by month; they wouldn't change too much in this case. At the end of each month there is an average interest rate achieved and then at the end of the year and average is calculated then applied to the reserve balances.

**Are funds being allocated for asset purchases from the Council budget or from the monies held by the cemeteries** – In the past Council has contributed funds, what will be happening from the 2016 financial year as the cemeteries are becoming self-reliant Council will only be contributing \$10 - \$12 000. This will not include capital acquisitions. The challenge going forward is that the three larger cemeteries will be supporting the smaller cemeteries that do not have the capacity to fully maintain the cemetery and funds for capital projects.

**Are all assets on an asset register and are they adequately insured** – Yes they are on an asset register and yes they are insured, the cost of the insurance is paid by Council and included in the larger insurance costs for all public assets.

**Question around Fees & Charges and CPI** – there has recently been a review taking place to work out how BVSC can become more sustainable, an undertaking was made that council should raise its fees by 2.4% every year to achieve a more cost recoverable level of income. There is some analysis being carried out with service versus the fee that is applied to see if the charge is equal to level of service provided. A draft report will be put together in the next couple of months with the findings from this. Council policy is that the 2.4% will be added over the CPI of 2.6%. Income is to be factored in against expenditure and on average most expenditure for maintenance etc. is going up at a higher rate than the income.

**What is the budget for cemeteries for the year** – the draft budget is on display now, a copy of this can be provided to the committees.

**ACTION 1** – BVSC to forward breakdown schedule of balances dating back to initial transfer of funds to Council. BVSC to provide breakdown of funds held in trust.

**ACTION 2** – BVSC to look into adding a column on the financial statements to show deceased.

**ACTION 3** – BVSC to forward draft budget for cemeteries.

#### 4 Action items from previous meeting

**Action Item 1-** Fuel Cabinet to be sourced and delivered to Eden Cemetery. **COMPLETE**

**Action Item 2- BVSC** to follow up with road contractor to fix gutters in Bermagui. Advised that BVSC have contacted the contractor and he will complete the job when he is in Bermagui next. **ONGOING – work was also done on new pipeline through the cemetery and some mess was left. BVSC to visit cemetery to check on issues.**

**Action Item 3- BVSC** are to do an audit for all cemeteries regarding trees. **ONGOING – this has been started. BVSC to engage internal tree person to assess trees before engaging a contractor for removal.**

**Action Item 4- BVSC** to investigate a cost effective alternative option to place flowers in. **ONGOING – BVSC have been looking into this and are continuing to try and find something suitable.**

**Action Item 5- BVSC** to investigate possibilities of conducting a workshop enabling volunteers to be accredited to weed spray. **ONGOING – BVSC to speak with internal weeds department to see if it possible to get the cemeteries on the schedule for spraying and other options for weeds spraying.**

**Action Item 6 - Finance Department Representatives and or IT** to come to the next S355 Committee Meeting with answers to questions on notice. **Committees** to forward questions regarding financial issues to [cemeterie@begavalley.nsw.gov.au](mailto:cemeterie@begavalley.nsw.gov.au). **COMPLETE**

**Action Item 7 – BVSC** to review Committee Guidelines and Operations Manual. **ONGOING**

#### Outstanding Action Items -

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## 5 Standing Business

### 5.1 Risk Management and Workplace Health & Safety

No issues were raised.

### 5.2 Policy and Procedure

No issues were raised.

## 6 New Business

Simon just wanted to thank Nathan Marshall for all his work over the years; he has contributed a lot to Council and to the cemeteries section in particular.

At present there are a couple of changes going on, but for now it is business as usual.

### 6.1 2015/16 Fees & Charges

A copy of the recommended Fees & Charges handed out for 2015/16 financial year. There were a few fees that weren't transferred over from last year, this was a clerical error and they will be added to final document.

Most of these fees have gone up slightly or by CPI, the only major changes are within the excavation charges. We have incorporated the removal of floor and lift lid and replace it charges into the single/double depth digging charges.

Question raised in regards to the excavation charge for 'stillborn/infant or child up to 8 years buried in pocket in base of adult grave' this is charged at the same rate as a single/double depth burial. BVSC will get clarification of the charge from the gravedigger.

Committees are asked to have a look at these fees and forward any issues by 29<sup>th</sup> May 2015.

Note – Wolumla, Bermagui and Wyndham committees are happy with these fees.

**ACTION 8 – Remaining Committees to forward feedback on Fees & Charges by 29<sup>th</sup> May 2015.**

### 6.2 Facility Management Plans Update

First draft of the Facility Management Plan handed to each individual cemetery committee. An interest amount has been placed in the budget, if we could ignore this until we get a firm number.

BVSC would like to come and meet with committees individually onsite to iron out any issues.

This plan lists the assets, budget and capital works for the coming years.

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This plan has been put together with the mind that there is no volunteer labour, so if all the volunteers decided to walk away and Council had maintain the cemeteries on their own that the maintenance schedule captures this. On top of this we will need to work out the value that the volunteers bring to that.

This will then be added to the overall Cemetery Management Plan which will then be put to Council and then the overall Asset Management Plan.

Wyndham Committee raised the water pipeline for the cemetery, BVSC to follow up the project with the contractor.

Committees are asked to have a good look through the document and think about anything they would like to add.

### **7 Other business**

Bermagui Committee raised an issue with a brush cutter that was picked up by Nathan and replaced with a whipper snipper; the charge for the whipper snipper is on the account. Should this just have been a swap? BVSC will look into this.

**ACTION 9** – BVSC to look into where the brush cutter went and funds related to this.

### **8 Meeting Close**

Meeting was closed at 6:52pm.

### **9 Next meeting**

The next meeting is to be held on **18 August 2015**.

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**Action Items Summary**

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