

Cemetery Board
September 4, 2025

A special meeting of the City of Waxahachie Cemetery Board was held on Thursday, September 4, 2025 at 8:30 a.m. in the Hatchet Conference Room at the Charles Beatty Municipal Services Building, 408 S. Rogers, Waxahachie, Texas.

Members Present: Perry Giles, Chairman
Trudy Hankins, Vice Chair
Connie McGuire
Mark Gundert
Alex Lohmann

Others Present: Kyle Cooper, Director of Parks & Recreation
Brad Barnes, Assistant Director of Parks & Recreation
Morgan Massey, Administrative Coordinator
Steve Hamm, Cemetery Supervisor
Patrick Souter, Mayor Pro Tem, Council Liaison

1. Call to Order

Chairman Perry Giles called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

2. Public Comments

None.

3. Consider approval of minutes of the City Cemetery Board meeting of August 7, 2025

Action:

Trudy Hankins moved to approve the minutes of the Cemetery Board meeting of August 7, 2025 as presented. Motion was seconded by Connie McGuire and carried unanimously (5-0).

4. Consider request by the Perez Family to place a bench on their plot in the Family Estates (G-6)

Action:

Connie McGuire moved to approve the request with the following conditions: the family must assume all risk, liability, and future maintenance for the bench, the installation must adhere to the presented specifications, including a 38 by 17-inch concrete base, using epoxy or a similar bonding agent to secure its components, placing the bench on an unused grave space within their family estate of G-6 in the Family Estates Section of the City Cemetery. Motion was seconded by Trudy Hankins and carried unanimously (5-0).

5. Hear update on Cemetery plot sales and services

Kyle Cooper provided a summary of cemetery activity year to date:

- Burials: 52
- Plot Sales: 65
- Cremation Sales: 2
- Columbarium Sales: 7

6. Hear update on the Wreaths Across America program

Mark Gundert provided an update on behalf of the Sons of America Revolution group, which is organizing the local Wreaths Across America event.

- The group has secured funding and volunteers to place approximately 600 wreaths on veteran graves in mid-December.
- A volunteer effort is underway to clean veteran headstones with D2 cleaning solution before the event. So far, 60-70 headstones have been cleaned, primarily by David Hill. A larger cleaning event with more volunteers, including Boy Scouts, is scheduled for Saturday, September 6th.
- The Cemetery's completed GIS mapping is being used to identify veteran graves.

7. Hear update on the funding required to repair the damaged headstones

Mark Gundert, who requested the agenda item, provided background information to update the board. He reviewed past discussions and clarified that the intent was to bring members up to speed. Mayor Pro Tem Patrick Souter reported that Police Chief Wiser confirmed no Crime Stoppers tips were received related to the incident. Kyle Cooper, Senior Director of Parks and Recreation, presented both the police and financial reports.

- The board reviewed the aftermath and resolution of the February 28, 2022 vandalism incident, in which 287 headstones were damaged.
- It was clarified that while the initial number was high, many stones had only been pushed over and were later reset by City staff and volunteers, including the Police Chief.
- The City contracted Texas Cemetery Restoration to professionally repair 97 severely damaged headstones, at a total cost of \$49,936.
 - Of that amount, \$35,665 was covered by donations.
 - The remaining balance was funded by the city.
- The police investigation has been officially closed due to a lack of actionable leads, despite identifying potential juvenile suspects and pursuing social media tips. The board concluded that all damage resulting from this specific vandalism incident has been addressed, and no further action is required at this time.

8. Hear update from the Police Department or City Manager on the investigation into the multiple vandalized headstones and the accounting of donations collected for repairs

This discussion overlapped with the previous agenda item, as both addressed related topics. Staff provided restoration photos, financial reports, and the police report for reference.

The board held a general discussion that extended beyond the recent vandalism incident to address the broader issue of aging and deteriorating headstones. Members noted significant improvements in grounds maintenance over the past year, crediting the progress to the addition of a new Cemetery Supervisor. With this role in place, staff have been able to move beyond basic upkeep and focus more on proactive repair and preservation efforts.

9. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:14 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Morgan Massey
Administrative Coordinator