

“New Meeting Date To Discuss Ovid Cemetery Needs”

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By Neil Chaffie

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Ovid supervisor David L. Dresser said he is hoping that officers can be elected and a way found to raise the funds needed for the care and upkeep of the nearly 14-acre Ovid Union Cemetery.

Cemetery association officials will meet with Dresser and others on June 28 at 7p.m. at the Ovid fire station. A meeting had been scheduled for June 14 but had to be called off because of other commitments of some of the participants.

Dresser told the Ovid town board during its Wednesday night, June 13, meeting that “I am doing everything that I can to help out.” He said he hopes that a 90 family data base maintained by Paul McPherson, a cemetery association member, may lead to people interested in serving as cemetery association members and in leadership and management roles.

He told of meeting back in May with Chris Cosco, a senior accountant, and Cynthia T. Craig, an investigator, both with the Division of Cemeteries, Department of State. Also attending were McPherson, David Eastman and James Fravil, all association members.

At that time, the association reported that its income could not be counted on to continue care and upkeep of the cemetery. The association reported \$59,184 on hand with about \$40,000 of that amount in what are known as reserve funds and only \$19,184 available for care and upkeep. The current charge for mowing and trimming of grass is \$9,500 a year.

McPherson explained the association has seen a decided decrease in burials with the closure of the Willard Psychiatric Center. There were about a dozen burials last year as compared to 50 in past years. As for lot sales, they total about six a year at \$500 each.

Where the cemetery once could operate off interests from bequests, the interest rate is down and so are bequests. Back in the 1980s, the association banked some \$120,000 and counted on interest rates of 12 to 14 percent and used that income for upkeep and care of the cemetery. The association’s last sizable bequest was received in 1981.

Officials said they are hoping the June 28 meeting attracts lot owners, prospective lot owners, families of those with loved ones buried there and others with an interest in the cemetery.

Should the association fail, care and upkeep of the cemetery would revert to the town. “We’re not interested in taking over the cemetery, I can tell you that,” Dresser told the state officials here for the May 10 meeting.

Dresser said the town currently is spending \$3,500 yearly to maintain four small cemeteries and isn’t looking forward to taking over another.