



Committee of the Whole Report

Report Number: CEM2025-001
Meeting Date: March 4, 2025
Title: Kawartha Lakes Cemeteries 2024 Annual Update
Author and Title: LeAnn Donnelly, Executive Assistant, Community Services

Recommendation(s):

That Report CEM2025-001, **Kawartha Lakes Cemeteries 2024 Annual Update**, be received;

That the Kawartha Lakes Cemetery Board be dissolved;

That an annual Cemetery Operations Update Report be provided to Council by staff;
and

That this recommendation be brought forward to Council for consideration at the next Regular Council Meeting.

Department Head: _____

Financial/Legal/HR/Other: _____

Chief Administrative Officer: _____

Background:

The Kawartha Lakes Cemetery Board was established on December 11, 2018 to replace the former Joint Cemetery Board to advise on City of Kawartha Lakes cemetery services such as Decoration Days, the sale of cemetery services and the provision of cemetery maintenance.

The Terms of Reference (2018) for the Kawartha Lakes Cemetery Board stipulate that an annual report be written to Council by the end of Q1 each calendar year. In the absence of the Board, a staff report outlining 2024 operations and upcoming 2025 work plan for the municipal cemetery program is provided below to address the direction within the Terms of Reference.

Rationale:

The Kawartha Lakes Cemetery Board last had members during the 2018-2022 Council term, consisting of four public members, one Council representative, and one vacant seat. In late 2022, the Clerk's office issued a call for volunteers to fill positions on the board for the 2022-2026 Council term. However, no applications were received, and there has been no further public interest in serving on the board since then. Despite the absence of a fully-formed board, cemetery operations, including maintenance, future planning, Decoration Days, and capital projects, have continued without issue. Given the lack of community interest and the absence of any impact on operations, it is recommended that the Kawartha Lakes Cemetery Board be dissolved.

Maintaining a Cemetery Board is not required by legislation, and is not a decision-making body. The City, to-date, has offered a Board structure to provide advice to staff and Council for cemetery operations and maintenance, and a forum for community consultation and feedback.

Since 2023, the cemetery portfolio within the Parks and Recreation Division accomplished the following:

- Restructuring of the Community Services Organization Chart to add a Supervisor position dedicated to Trails and Cemetery Operations to enhance cemetery operations.
- Ongoing operational maintenance of seventeen active and thirty inactive municipal cemeteries, including grounds maintenance, burial services, and monument care and maintenance.

- Refurbished columbarium flowerbeds and developed an ongoing maintenance plan.
- Installation of Columbaria at Coboconk, Janetville and Lake Dalrymple Cemeteries to accommodate growing demand.
- Ongoing maintenance to fencing, gates, and internal roadways across all cemetery locations.

The 2025 Work Plan for Cemetery Operations includes:

- Ongoing fencing and gate replacements.
- Internal roadway rehabilitation on a priority basis.
- Continued monument restoration as needed across all municipal cemetery locations.
- Ongoing tree maintenance to meet safety standards and preserve the decorum of the cemetery property.
- Investigate storage options for operational tools and equipment at cemetery properties where no structures exist.
- Identify and naturally screen locations for material storage at select active cemetery properties and pilot containment options for material piles.

Other Alternatives Considered:

Council could choose to keep the Kawartha Lakes Cemetery Board an active Committee of Council and seek representation from the community. However, due to lack of public interest, and previous challenges with meeting attendance, staff do not recommend continuing the Kawartha Lakes Cemetery Board.

Alignment to Strategic Priorities

The recommendations in this report align with the following strategic priority within 2024-2027 Kawartha Lakes Strategic Plan:

An Exceptional Quality of Life – increasing the beautification efforts in the municipal cemeteries.

Good Government – ensuring municipal assets are well maintained and well managed, by promoting continuous improvement in all service areas, and by increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery.

Financial/Operation Impacts:

Costs associated with work plan recommendations are addressed by existing operating and capital budgets.

Servicing Implications:

There is no servicing implications associated with this report.

Consultations:

Manager, Parks and Recreation

Supervisor, Trails and Cemetery Operations

Attachments:

N/A

Department Head email: jjohnson@kawarthalakes.ca

Department Head: Jenn Johnson, Director of Community Services