

North Carolina Cemetery Commission Quarterly Meeting Minutes July 30, 2025

The North Carolina Cemetery Commission held a quarterly meeting on Wednesday, July 30, 2025, hosted at the Hilton in North Hills, Raleigh.

President William “Bill” Gaffney and the following Commissioners were present: Mr. Brian Hill, Mr. David Buchanan, Mr. Bobby Townsend, Ms. Sharon Weaver, Ms. Bonita Caldwell, Mr. David Simmons, Ms. Linda Cotten Dodson, Ms. LaRay Holloman, and Mr. Gantt Stephens, Director of Operations, were also in attendance.

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 am. President Gaffney called for a moment of silence.

The first item of the meeting was the agenda approval. Ms. Cotten Dodson moved to approve the agenda as written, with the exception of adding an item C to discuss the resolution to honor former Commissioner Hendren. The motion was seconded by Ms. Caldwell. All voted in favor of accepting the agenda as written.

The second item of the meeting was the minutes’ approval. Mr. Hill moved to approve the agenda as written. The motion was seconded by Ms. Cotten Dodsens. All voted in favor of accepting the agenda as written.

I. **Conflict of Interest:**

President Gaffney declared that, in accordance with the State Government Ethics Act 138A 15E, it is the duty of every Commission member to avoid both conflicts of interest and appearances of conflicts regarding the matters being brought before them and to refrain from any undue participation in the matters involved.

Mr. Brian Hill reported a conflict of interest and will refrain from voting on matter 4A of new business regarding the change of control for Guil Rand Memorial Park.

II. **Operations Report** - Mr. Stephens began by reviewing the financials and asked if there were any questions or comments. There were none. The operations report was provided to the Commissioners and opened for discussion.

- a. **Lee Memory Gardens** – Discussion revealed the monthly reporting and associated fees from Lee Memory Gardens are chronically late. Office staff confirmed numerous attempts to obtain reports and fees from Lee Memory Gardens without any response. Ms. Cotten Dodson moved to suspend the preneed license of Lee Memory Gardens effective immediately, and lasting until such time as the Commission office receives the reports and all outstanding fees owed. The motion was seconded by Ms. Holloman and passed unanimously.
- b. **Sunrise Memorial Gardens** – Discussion revealed the monthly reporting and associated fees from Sunrise Memorial Gardens are chronically late. Office staff confirmed numerous attempts to obtain reports and fees from Mr. Edgerton without any success. Mr. Edgerton explains lack of sales as the reason he does not submit reports. Ms. Cotten Dodson moved to suspend the preneed license of Sunrise Memorial Gardens effective immediately, and lasting until such time as the Commission office receives the reports

and all outstanding fees owed. The motion was seconded by Ms. Holloman and passed unanimously.

- c. **Harnett Devotional Gardens** – Mr. Stephens discussed the legislation that passed related to the conditions at Harnett Devotional Gardens of Dunn. The Commissioners are provided with photos and complaints regarding the conditions of the grounds and mausoleum. There was discussion amongst the Commissioners regarding the rationale provided by the cemetery. Ms. Cotten Dodson moved to revoke the preneed sales license at Harnett Devotional Gardens if they do not satisfactorily respond a 20-day notice regarding specific plans for the conditions at the cemetery. The motion was seconded by Ms. Holloman and passed unanimously.

III. **Requests from the Public to Address the Commission** - President Gaffney invited any member of the public wishing to address the Commission to come forward.

1. **Ms. Domini Pierce** requested to speak regarding the conditions of the mausoleum and general grounds at Harnett Devotional Gardens of Dunn. Ms. Pierce elaborated on the complaints discussed during the operations report. She stated the conditions of the mausoleum include wet carpet and odor. She stated complaints have been made to the health department of Harnett County and there is no response from the cemetery management. Ms. Peirce requested clarification regarding the bill related to perpetual care standards that was recently enacted. Mr. Stephens explained that the current draft does not provide specific standards or definitions of perpetual care and that there is hope of clarifying this in time.
2. **Mr. Rodway Hudson** requested to speak regarding Harnett Devotional Gardens. Mr. Hudson explained how the conditions have continued to decline at the cemetery. He stated the cemetery is not in the condition it was in when the interment rights for his family were purchased. Mr. Hudson also stated the community is currently coming together on weekends to clean the property and attempts to contact the ownership of Faithful Heritage Holdings have gone unanswered.

IV. **New Business-**

- a. **Change of Control for Guil Rand Memorial Park** – Mr. Gaffney directed the Commissioners to the packages of information sent by the current and proposed new owners of Guil Rand Memorial Park. The Commissioners confirmed that all items needed for the change were present. Representatives from both the buyer and seller were present and available for any questions. Ms. Cotten Dodson made a motion to accept the change of control of Guil Rand Memorial Park from current owners, Leslie Long and Tyler Bovia, to W. Brian Hill. The motion was seconded by Mr. Simmons and passed unanimously.
- b. **NCCC Budget Adoption** – All Commissioners received a copy of the proposed budget for the upcoming fiscal year. Ms. Holloman moved to approve the budget as presented. Ms. Caldwell seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

- c. **Lincoln Memorial Park Complaint and Highland Biblical Gardens Inspection Findings -**
All Commissioners received a copy of a formal complaint against Lincoln Memorial Park and a copy of inspection findings for Highland Biblical Gardens. These properties are owned by the Porter family and have very low sales volume. Both owners are in poor health and have not responded to requests for response to these two items. Ms. Cotten Dodson moved to suspend the license for both Lincoln Memorial Park and Highland Biblical Gardens until a response addressing the concerns raised in the complaint and inspection findings are received by the Commission office. Mr. Hill seconded this motion. Motion passed

V. Old Business

- a. **LandQuest Legacy Receivership** – Mr. Stephens provided an update on the situation at the five cemeteries owned by Kyle Corkum of LandQuest Legacy. The situation continues to improve across all five properties.
- b. **Shepherd Memorial Park Receivership** – Mr. Gaffney provided an update regarding the receivership at Shepherd Memorial Park. He reminded the Commissioners at the previous meeting the cemetery was to be auction in the coming weeks. Mr. Gaffney explained this auction resulted in a single bid that did not cover the liabilities of the cemetery. The bidder, Mr. Altmeyer, agreed to increase the bid to cover all liabilities. Mr. Gaffney explained that after this bid, Mrs. Melody Shepherd also requested to place a bid via a to-be-established trust. This has resulted in further action by the courts.
- c. **Resolution for former Commissioner Ebbie Whitley Hendren discussed. Resolution is attached**

- VI. Election of Officers** – Ms. Holloman made a motion to keep all currently serving officers to remain in their positions: Bill Gaffney, President; Linda Cotten Dodson, Vice President; and Sharon Weaver, Treasurer. Mr. Buchanan seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

VII. Reminder of next meeting date

Mr. Gaffney reminded all in attendance that the next scheduled quarterly meeting will take place on October 15, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. at the Hilton in North Hills, Raleigh.

VIII. Adjournment

Ms. Holloman moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Cotten Dodson. The meeting was adjourned.