

LA PORTE COUNTY PIONEER CEMETERY COMMISSION
COURTHOUSE SQUARE
LA PORTE, IN 46350

---Board Members---
Edward A. Marks, President Larry Pinkerton, Vice President
Susan Webster, Financial Secretary Patricia Harris, Recording Secretary
Bruce Johnson

3 February 2024

Indiana Historical Bureau
140 N. Senate Avenue
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Sir or Madam:

Attached please find the annual report of the La Porte County Pioneer Cemetery Commission to be filed with your office under Indiana Cemetery Law IC 4-23-7-3. The attached contains the Commission budget and expenditures for the year 2023, Activities of the Commission for the year 2023; and the Plans of the Commission for the year 2024.

A copy has also been filed with the offices of the La Porte County Commissioners and the La Porte County Council per Indiana Cemetery Law IC-4-23-7-3.

Sincerely,

La Porte County Pioneer Cemetery Commission

Edward A. Marks

Larry Pinkerton

Susan Webster

Patricia Harris

Bruce Johnson

Enc.

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Budget and Expenditures for Calendar Year 2023

<u>Category</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Expenditures</u>
Office Supplies	\$ 200.00	\$ 55.72
Postage	75.00	60.84
Paint-Painting	1,000.00	1,000.00
Mileage	750.00	766.80 (1)
Landscaping	1,000.00	616.80 (1)
Tombstone Repair	12,000.00	12,000.00
Cemetery Maintenance	20,000.00	18,605.00
Fencing & Gates	-0-	-0-
Board Members	1,458.00	1,822.48 (2)
Head of Department	6,401.00	6,401.00
Social Security & Medicare	526.00	594.17
Claims	<u>100.00</u>	<u>100.00</u>
Totals	\$ 43,510.00	\$ 42,022.81

Unexpended Balance \$ 1,487.19

- (1) \$16.80 transferred from Landscaping to Mileage for additional inspections of cemeteries this year.
- (2) Error in auditor's office.

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2023 Activities

Monthly Meetings – Structured monthly meetings for board members.

Availability to the Public – We are available 10:00 – 1:00 p.m. first Friday of each month and other times by phone or e-mail. A Cemetery Commission brochure is available to various groups and interested persons.

Cemetery Visitations – We incorporated with two of our monthly meetings, visitations as a board, to ten pioneer cemeteries. This was done to acquaint all members with the La Porte County cemeteries and to determine individual cemetery needs as an aid to determining priorities on maintenance, repair and restoration and inspect contracted work.

Historians/Liaisons Volunteers – Volunteers watched over our cemeteries and reported any act of vandalism or cemetery need.

Stone Restorations –Stone restoration final phase #4 at Miller-Griffin cemetery repaired by Helen Wildermuth of Stonehugger Cemetery Restoration.

Fencing – Wooden fence at Beattys Corners Cemetery repaired and painted.

Documentation/Photographs – We continued to photograph and document tombstones before they become illegible or vandalism occurs. We have also continued to seek out locations of old cemeteries not known to us previously and then research and document. The Old Prison Cemetery land currently in private ownership was deeded to the La Porte County Commissioners and will come under the maintenance supervision and research of the Pioneer Cemetery Commission.

Written Reports on Cemeteries – Board members are assigned certain cemeteries that are to be checked by them for caretaking condition and other items throughout the year and they then report their findings on a Cemetery Inspection Report Record.

Request for Bids and Contracts – We continue to use standardized forms for Request for Bids for Cemetery Maintenance and Contracts for Cemetery Maintenance as well as for Uncontracted Maintenance of Cemeteries and for Stone Restoration, etc.

Cemetery Maintenance – Pioneer Cemeteries without any funding are maintained by a contracted firm who is doing excellent work. Others that had caretakers and/or some funding for maintenance were aided with funds budgeted by the Cemetery Commission. Dead trees were removed at Miller Griffin Cemetery and mulched uphill path to Shippeeburg Cemetery to aid walking and control weeds.

Signage –Replacement cemetery signs for Day and Miriam Benedict were installed and signs for Norton and Sauktown were purchased and will be installed as weather permits.

Surveys – Special funding was secured from the County Council for clarification of property lines at Sharp, Webster and Miriam Benedict cemeteries. Sharp completed in 2022 and Webster and Miriam Benedict in 2023.

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2024 Cemetery Commission Plans

Monthly Meetings – Structured monthly meetings for Board Members.

Availability to the Public – Available to public 10:00 am – 1:00 pm first Friday of each month and otherwise by e-mail, phone or mail.

Cemetery Visitations – Continue to visit various cemeteries as a group to acquaint all members with the La Porte County cemeteries and to set priorities.

Historians/Liaisons-Volunteers – Continue to have volunteers watch over our cemeteries and report any act of vandalism or cemetery need. Encourage the continuation of transcribing all gravestones, photography, writing histories and identifying veterans graves with the aid of volunteers.

Discovery and Research – Seek out the locations of old cemeteries not known to us previously and then view, research and document, as well as researching and documenting known cemeteries and the burials therein. Clarification of property lines of Webster & Miriam Benedict cemeteries.

Continued Preservation of Our Cemeteries – Caretaking is extremely important in our cemeteries as it can affect the safety of individuals visiting the cemeteries.

1. Communication with sexton/caretakers to allow them to make the needs of their individual cemeteries known to the board and discuss ways to prevent vandalism. Enter into written agreements with them detailing the work to be performed in the cemeteries stating a specific amount to be budgeted for the work from Commission funds.
2. Contract with lawn care services for cemetery maintenance for those cemeteries who do not have caretakers. Seek aid of County Highway Dept. for needed removal of trees, etc. and supply and delivery of wood chips for entry paths, etc.
3. Many of our tombstones are in need of repair. We will contract for the repair of phase #1 at Beattys Corners Cemetery in the amount of \$8,000.00 & \$4,000 final payment for Miller Griffin Cemetery. Repair of stone at Morgan Cemetery.
4. Inspect fences for needed repairs and painting.
5. Continue to replace signs at cemeteries as funds permit. Touch up paint Tuley Cemetery sign.
6. Contract needed tree work – Remove large tree and large Branch at Norton Cemetery.
7. Clear the west side of Lambs Chapel Cemetery overgrown with foliage.
8. Determine and seek bids for trees needing work at Morgan Cemetery.
9. Have access path and graves cleared of overgrown foliage.
10. Research and provide signage for Old Prison Cemetery recently deeded to the La Porte County Commissioners.
11. We have begun a program of historical research to install signs at the cemeteries telling about their history. We have installed signs at Eahart-Reed, Norton, Coulter, Hudson Lake, Tuley, Maple Grove, Pike, Beattys Corners, Miriam Benedict, Webster, Teeter, and Winchell and plan to install others as research is completed.

Written Reports- Continue using the Cemetery Inspection Form, a written report for board members to report on the condition of our cemeteries throughout the year.