

MISSION STATEMENT

The Paxton Cemetery Commission and Department of Public Works are committed to providing a serene, attractive, and contemplative setting for the families of those interred in the Center and Mooreland cemeteries. We are dedicated to offering service in a dignified manner, respectful of the wishes and beliefs of the deceased and their families.

All inquiries and plot purchases may be addressed to the Cemetery Agent at the Paxton DPW: 508-753-9077

SECTION 1 – RULES AND GUIDELINES

SECTION 2 – PURCHASE OF CEMETERY PLOTS

SECTION 3 – BURIALS

SECTION 4 – PERPETUAL CARE

SECTION 5 – MONUMENTS, FOUNDATIONS, GRADING & IMPROVEMENTS

SECTION 6 – FLOWERS, TREES AND SHRUBS

SECTION 7 – FLAGS & DECORATIONS

Introduction

Both the Center Cemetery and Mooreland Cemetery are owned and operated by the Town of Paxton under the supervision of the Cemetery Commission whose members are elected for staggered three-year terms. Under their direction, the Paxton Department of Public Works (referred to as the DPW) performs all functions in the cemeteries, including grave openings and closings and all routine grounds maintenance.

The first burial in the Center Cemetery was in 1765 and for nearly 150 years, this cemetery served as the town's only burial place. The cemetery was expanded in the 1870's and embellished with iron gates and better organization of gravestones. The Center Cemetery is no longer active, and burials are limited to those families already owning deeds or plots there.

The Mooreland Cemetery was established by the Town of Paxton in 1913 when the town voted to purchase land once owned by the Moore family. This family included Captain Pliny Moore and Major Willard Moore, both of whom served in the Revolutionary War. Town historian Roxa Howard Bush and her brother Ora Howard were active in the creation of this cemetery and donated the pillars at the gate. The Mooreland Cemetery was dedicated in 1915 and is the Town's active municipal cemetery.

SECTION 1**Rules and Guidelines**

- A The Cemetery is open from dawn to dusk. All funerals in the cemetery will be under the direction of the Director of Public Works. Children under fourteen are not permitted in the cemetery unless accompanied by an adult responsible for their behavior.
- B Persons visiting the cemetery are always expected to conduct themselves in a courteous and respectful manner at all times. No recreational activities such as ball playing, hockey, use of roller blades, skating, or golfing are allowed in the cemetery. Barbecues, picnics and the consumption of alcoholic beverages are not allowed. Firearms are only allowed in the cemetery for military and memorial services. Dogs and cats are not allowed to roam in the cemetery and must always remain inside a vehicle.
- C All vehicles must remain on roadways and are not allowed to travel at a speed greater than ten miles per hour. Visitors may only use avenues and paths to gain immediate access to a gravesite. No motorized bikes or other recreational vehicles are allowed.
- D Any person who destroys or defaces any monument, tree, shrub, plant or building is guilty of a serious offense punishable by fine, imprisonment or both. The gathering of flowers, either wild or cultivated, on cemetery grounds is forbidden. The state law on vandalism of the cemetery will be rigidly enforced.
- E Metal detectors are not allowed in the cemetery.
- F Special cases may arise in which the literal enforcements of a rule may impose an unnecessary hardship. In these cases, the Cemetery Commission reserves the right to make exceptions, or modifications to any of these rules. Decisions in such cases shall be temporary in nature and shall in no way permanently change the rules laid out in this document.
- G Any aggrieved person may petition the Cemetery Commission at a regularly scheduled public meeting, if he or she believes an exception to the rules is warranted.

SECTION 2

Purchase of Cemetery Plots

Plot is a single grave. Lot is a set of 6 plots at the same cemetery address.

- A Cemetery plots may be purchased by contacting the Cemetery Agent at the Paxton DPW, 508-753-9077. Fifty percent of the sale price of grave plots goes into the Perpetual Care fund. All plots must be paid for in full at the time of purchase. Burials may only take place after a grave deed has been issued.
- B Residents may purchase up to six plots per family. Larger lots containing more than six graves may only be purchased with the special permission of the Cemetery Commission. The right of ownership is limited to those individuals who were or are now residents of the Town of Paxton for a minimum of one year. Proof of residency will be required.
- C Owners wanting to swap their purchased plots to a new location may only do so as follows:
 - 1) All plots being swapped must be empty.
 - 2) Owner must pay the difference from the original price paid per plot to the current cost per plot at the time of the swap, plus a \$50.00 transaction processing fee.
- D Cemetery deeds cannot be sold between private parties or transferred outside of the deed owner's family. Should the original owners wish to sell their plot(s) back to the Town of Paxton they must submit a request in writing stating the reason for the request. The Cemetery Commission will review their request, and if approval is granted, the plot(s) may be returned to the Town of Paxton and the refund amount will be for the exact price paid at the time of the original purchase.
- E Plots shall be limited to the interment of deed owners and their immediate family. Upon the death of the deed owner, his legal heirs shall inherit the plot deed, and succeed to all the privileges with the same restrictions, limitations and conditions contained within the deed. If the owner(s) is/are deceased, all requests of an heir must be accompanied by a birth certificate providing he/she is an immediate descendent of the original owner(s).
- F The Town may take over the ownership of an unoccupied grave after a minimum of seventy-five years has elapsed since the deed was issued, provided that after a diligent search the Town cannot locate the owner or the owner's successor in interest. If the ownership of the deed is ascertained after such repossession occurs, then the Town shall pay the fair value of the deed at the time of its repossession. (Chapter 114: Section 10A. Municipality ownership of unclaimed graves; reuse of occupied graves)
- G The Town will not appropriate to any other use than that of a burial ground, any tract of land, which has been for more than one hundred years used as a burial place. No portion of such a burial ground shall be taken for public use without special authority from the general court. "Burial Place", as referred to here, shall include unmarked burial grounds, known or suspected to contain the remains of one or more American Indian(s).

MOORELAND CEMETERY SCHEDULE OF FEES

PLOT PURCHASE FEES

	Effective Jan. 1, 2023 \$550.00 per plot	Effective Jan 1, 2025 \$600.00 per plot	Effective Jan 1, 2027 \$650.00 per plot
2 Grave Plots	\$1,100	\$1,200	\$1,300
3 Grave Plots	\$1,650	\$1,800	\$1,950
4 Grave Plots	\$2,200	\$2,400	\$2,600
6 Grave Plots	\$3,300	\$3,600	\$3,900

SINGLE PLOT SALES: Plots are sold in sets of 2,3,4 or 6. If a single plot is requested, it may only occur if a single plot is available in lots where all 5 plots are sold. There will be no choice of location, but rather only if, and only wherever, single plots are available.

BURIAL FEES

Weekdays	\$950	\$1,000	\$1,050
Weekends	\$1,100	\$1,150	\$1,200

CREMATION BURIAL FEES

Weekdays	\$650	\$700	\$750
Weekends	\$800	\$850	\$900

INFANT BURIAL FEES

Weekdays	\$550	\$600	\$650
Weekends	\$700	\$750	\$800

SECTION 3**BURIALS**

- A Only one full-size vault or four vaulted cremains may be placed in one grave plot. If the full-size vault is buried first, one, two or three vaulted cremains may be placed there as well.
- B Sealed covered vaults must be provided for all casket burials. Solid urns or solid urn vaults must be provided for all cremation burials. The Town does NOT provide these vaults.
- C Cornerstones indicating the boundaries of the lot shall be set level with the ground and will be furnished by the Cemetery Commission and set under the direction of the Director of Public Works. They must not be altered or removed.
- D When instructions regarding the location of an interment in a plot cannot be obtained, are unclear, or when for any reason the interment space cannot be opened where specified, the Director of Public Works may open it in such a location in the plot as he deems best and proper, and the Cemetery Commission shall not be liable for damages incurred.
- E No burials shall occur on New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, Presidents Day, Patriot's Day, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas, or any other day that the Town considers a holiday. No burial may occur after 12pm on Saturday, and at no time on Sunday.
- F No burial may take place without the following paperwork submitted before or at the time of interment:
- Name of Deceased, Date of Birth and Date of Death
 - Paperwork/Permit for Authorization of Burial
 - Cremation Certificate / Death Certificate
 - Full Payment of Services
- The Director of Public Works reserves the right to postpone a burial if all required documents and payment have not been received.

SECTION 4**PERPETUAL CARE**

- A Under the term Perpetual Care shall be understood: the cutting of the grass at the proper intervals, maintaining grave levels, reseeding, raking and cleaning of the grounds and general maintenance. This care does not include the planting of flowers, ornamental plants, their maintenance, and the repair or replacement of gravestones, monuments and memorials.
- B The money received for Perpetual Care shall be held in trust and invested as provided by law. All sums so received, together with the fund already created, shall collectively constitute the "Perpetual Care Fund."
- C Half of the sale price of a grave plot shall go into the Sale of Lots Fund and the other half of the sale price shall go into the Perpetual Care Fund.
- D Gifts and bequests received by the Cemetery Commission shall be used exclusively for the maintenance of the cemeteries or individual cemetery plots. This money shall be paid into the Town treasury and kept separate from other monies and accounts of the Town. The Town shall invest all such funds in accordance with the stipulations accompanying them. (Otherwise the Town shall invest or use the interest earned as ordered by the Cemetery Commission).

SECTION 5

MONUMENTS, FOUNDATIONS, GRADING & IMPROVEMENTS

- A All monuments must be suitable for the size of the lot and only one monument is permitted on each grave site and may not exceed five feet in width. Monuments may not exceed sixty-six inches in height.
- B Single grave plot stones cannot be more than two feet in width, with a twenty-four by twelve-inch base.
- C Memorial companies must submit a detailed drawing of the monument, specifying dimensions, color, type of stone, type of finish, inscription, maker's name and any other information necessary. The work contract shall be signed by the owner of the plot. The Cemetery Commission reserves the right to reject the design because of size, configuration, lettering, color, material, finish, quality or method of construction. The Cemetery Commission shall have the same right to prevent installation or remove at grave or plot holder's expense, a memorial not meeting design quality or trade standards. All monuments must be approved by the Cemetery Commission.
- D Monuments may only be erected from April 1st to October 30th or at the discretion of the Director of Public Works and the Cemetery Commission.
- E If any memorial, decoration or structure is to contain an inscription, which after consideration by the Cemetery Commission is determined to be offensive, the Cemetery Commission shall have the right and duty to remove, change or correct the offensive or inappropriate inscription. No display of nudity (offensive to accepted standards of decency or modesty), profanity, vulgarity shall be allowed as a design element of a monument.
- F Stone carvers and firms engaged in the business of cleaning monuments must procure permission from the Director of Public Works / Cemetery Commission before any work in the cemetery commences.
- G Foundations are required for all monuments and foot markers. Foundations must only be installed by DPW employees.
- H Foundations may not be closer than six inches to the edge of a grave plot(s).
- I The Commission reserves the right to do all grading and landscape and to take any measures necessary in the care of graves and lots.
- J All improvements or alterations of graves or plot(s) shall be made under the direction of, and are subject to the approval of, the Cemetery Commission. Should they be made by plot owners without prior consent, the Cemetery Commission reserves the right to remove or change such alterations at the expense of the grave or lot owner.

SECTION 6

FLOWERS, TREES AND SHRUBS

- A Flowers may only be planted in the front of, or on the sides of above ground monuments.
- B Plantings should only include only those plants listed as non-invasive perennials, ground covers or annual plants. No rose bushes of any variety will be allowed. No vegetable planting will be allowed.
- C All winter baskets, cemetery pots and artificial material shall be removed by April 1st or as directed by the Director of Public Works.
- D The planting or replacement of trees and hedges is not permitted, and these may be removed without notice. Two small shrubs per monument are allowed. These shall at maturity, not exceed the height of the monument.
- E The Director of Public Works is directed to remove from any grave or lot any tree, shrub, hedge, article or structure which has become unsightly, diseased, hazardous, overgrown, or detrimental to adjacent graves, paths, avenues or poses a danger to the public. All tree maintenance work, such as planting, trimming, cutting or removing of trees and shrubs is to be performed only by DPW employees or contractors authorized by the Cemetery Commission.
- F Donations are accepted for the memorial planting of trees and shrubs. The choice of a location for such a planting is at the discretion of the Cemetery Commission, see Perpetual Care, section D.

SECTION 7**FLAGS AND DECORATIONS**

- A One American flag is permitted on each grave. The Cemetery Commission is not responsible for placing flags on graves. Local Veterans organizations and Paxton youth groups often provide this service at sites in which a Veteran is buried.
- B Any decoration left on graves or lots will be removed as soon as possible after it becomes unsightly. The Town is not responsible for storm damage or acts of vandalism to, or theft of, urns, receptacles and baskets placed on plots.
- C Any decorative element that might be injurious to town workers will be removed by the Director of Public Works.
- D Traditional style Eternal/Vigil lights are acceptable and may be placed next to a raised monument and are subject to the same regulations as any temporary decorations. The Cemetery Commission reserves the right to remove or modify these memorials should they become unsightly or a nuisance to maintenance efforts.
- E Wires may not be used to hold pots or flowers upright on either graves or lots as they constitute a serious hazard to mower and trimmer operators.
- F The following are prohibited: fences, hedges, walls, rock gardens, curbing, enclosures, edgings, iron works, wire works, seats, posts, steps, boundary markers and any glass items. Anything that could be destroyed or scattered by wind, weather, or force of cemetery maintenance equipment (e.g., mower, trimmer, plow, backhoe) will be removed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

**Cemeteries and Burials
Chapter 114 Mass. General Laws**

www.masgov.org

A Consumer Guide to Cemetery and Funeral Services

www.macemetery.org

Funerals: A Consumer Guide

www.ftc.gov

**MA Cemetery Association, Inc.
617-859-7778**

**MA Funeral Directors Association
1-781-335-2031**

www.commonwealconservancy.org

<http://fcaemass.org>