

POLICY & PROCEDURES

for the

City of Laurel Cemetery

Laurel, Montana



**Passed and Approved by the City Council
Resolution No. R20-12
Adopted on March 10, 2020**

1. CITY POLICY

- a. The City of Laurel has sole jurisdiction and overall responsibility for the policy, procedures, budget and operations of the Laurel Cemetery. The City shall ensure the Laurel Cemetery is maintained in an honorable and dignified manner to perpetually memorialize the deceased persons.
- b. The City of Laurel Public Works Department is responsible for the operation, maintenance, and opening /closing of the graves for the cemetery.
- c. The City Clerk's office is responsible for the collections of monies for plots and opening /closing of the graves.
- d. Cemetery Hours: The Laurel municipal cemetery shall be closed to the public on each day from sunset to seven a.m. No person shall enter or remain on cemetery grounds during hours of closure without prior approval from the cemetery commission. (LMC 2.84.110)
- e. Dogs or other pets are not allowed on cemetery grounds except for guide dogs of the legally blind.
- f. Recreational activities are not allowed on cemetery grounds including the consumption of alcohol or the use of illegal drugs.
- g. Vehicle traffic is limited to five (5) m.p.h. and must stay on designated cemetery roads.
- h. The City is not responsible for the theft or loss of personal belongings.

2. CEMETERY COMMISSION

- a. The commission consists of seven members. One member of the commission shall be the duly elected, qualified acting mayor of the city. Six remaining commission members shall be appointed by the mayor and approved by the council as follows: Two members shall be duly elected, qualified and acting alderpersons of the city; two members shall reside within the city limits; and two members shall reside at large in Yellowstone County. The term of office of each member shall be two years or sooner, as specified in the mayor's appointment and until his/her successor is appointed and qualified. Any vacancy shall be filled by appointment for the unexpired term. (LMC 2.84.010)
- b. Control and manage all things pertaining to the city cemetery. (LMC 2.84.020)
- c. The commission shall adopt rules and regulations for the control and management of the cemetery, which rules and regulations shall be established by resolution of the city council; and which may be changed or amended from time to time by resolution of the

city council as recommended by the commission and as the council may deem appropriate. (LMC 2.84.020)

3. **INTERNMENT**

- a. Hours of internment; Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. to 12 p.m. at overtime rate. Graveside funerals will not be scheduled after 3:00 p.m. No Sunday or holiday burial unless for religious reasons.
- b. Outer burial containers required for adult and baby casket burials. No outer burial container is required for ashes. We do not handle vaults; this is handled by private companies. Our minimum outer container requirement is fiberglass.
 - (1.) Outer burial container materials allowed: concrete, polyguard with base, or fiberglass with base.
 - (2.) A vault will protect the casket and prevent a cave-in of the ground, if there is deterioration of the casket.
- c. The City of Laurel reserves the right to require a minimum of 48 hours notice for burials.
- d. No person other than City authorized personnel shall excavate a gravesite unless authorized by the Mayor or his designee.
- e. The City of Laurel would encourage funeral directors to limit the internment time at the graveside to one-half (½) hour to facilitate the caretaker's work.
- f. A maximum of three burials are allowed in one plot. If there is a full burial, it must be first, and then two cremains are allowed on top. If there is no full burial, three cremains are allowed in one lot. In all cases, only one headstone and one foot stone per lot.
- g. The man is generally buried to the south, and the woman is buried to the north, but this is the preference of the individual.
- h. Bodies are placed in the grave with the head on the west end of grave.
- i. Typically cremains are buried at the head of the grave and at the foot of the grave, unless a family prefers a different arrangement.

4. **HEADSTONES**

- a. All headstones and footstones must be made of either granite, marble or bronze. No other materials are allowed.
- b. A maximum of two markers per lot, one headstone and one footstone.

- c. The City does not install headstones or footstones and requires prior notification of the placement of these monuments by calling the PWD at (406) 628-4796.
- d. The City is not responsible for the repair or replacement of headstones, footstones, or monuments from damages due to theft or vandalism.
- e. Headstones are placed at the head of the grave and may be read from either the east or west, at the discretion of the individual. Generally they are placed, as when reading them, when standing behind the head of the grave in a walkway, looking at the grave in front of you.
 - (1.) Where plots and lots have been previously started, the markers will be in accordance with the stones that have been previously placed.
 - (2.) Markers for unopened sections will be decided upon at the time the section is opened for burials.
 - (3.) Bevel style or flat markers are required in the following sections and all subsequent sections: Section B, Section G, Section H, Section J and Section O.
 - (4.) Section B, Section J, and all new sections have rebar markers on both sides to identify the front alignment of each grave row. Contractors setting foundations for headstone and markers are required to use the alignment established to set, when placing all concrete work. The front edge of the stone must line up with the established alignment. Concrete foundations may project into the walkway by eight inches.
- f. Single Headstone
 - (1.) Marker must be at least 24" long and no more than 30" long.
 - (2.) Marker width shall be at least 12" and no more than 14" wide.
 - (3.) Marker height for bevel style shall be at least 6" but no more than 8" in back, sloping to the front.
- g. Double Headstone
 - (1.) Marker must be at least 42" long and no more than 68" long.
 - (2.) Marker width shall be at least 12" and no more than 14" wide.
 - (3.) Marker height for bevel style shall be at least 6" but no more than 8" in back, sloping to the front.
- h. Baby Headstone – Baby Section K
 - (1.) Lot is 3' wide by 5' long.
 - (2.) Marker must be at least 18" long and no more than 20" long. (The most common baby size is 10" x 20".)
 - (3.) Marker width shall be at least 10" and no more than 14" wide.
 - (4.) Foundation regulations are the same as for other stones with a minimum 8" collar of cement.

5. VETERAN'S SECTION - MARKERS / GRAVE INFORMATION

- a. The white upright marble veteran headstone is only allowed in the designated veteran sections, Section C and Section J. Veteran footstones, made of granite or bronze, are placed in other sections as a footstone.
- b. Foundations must follow regulations for single markers regarding length, width and depth of concrete.
- c. The cremains of the veteran's spouse are allowed to be buried on the veteran's grave after the veteran is buried (exception to this rule will be made if both the veteran and spouse are cremation internments. A Veteran headstone must be ordered and purchased for the spouse at the time of internment. At the time of the Veteran's internment the spouses headstone will be replaced with a VA supplied headstone.
- d. The spouse's name and dates of birth and death are allowed to be engraved on the back of the stone after their death, in uniform lettering with the front of the stone, at the family's expense. No additional information is allowed.
- e. No additional graphics are allowed to be engraved on the upright white marble stone after placement. It voids the warranty and is considered vandalism by the military.
- f. Nothing is allowed to be tied or wired onto the headstone at any time. It will be removed and disposed of.
- g. No additional marker or footstone is allowed on the grave.

6. FOOT STONES

- a. Foot stones must be level with the ground and set in a proper foundation with the minimum 8" collar of cement.
- b. No floral vases allowed in foot stones.
- c. The marker must be at least 24" long and no more than 30" long (exception see e.)
- d. Marker width shall be at least 12" and no more than 14" wide (exception see e.)
- e. Where plots and lots have been previously started, the foot stones will be in accordance with the stones that have been previously placed in those sections

7. MONUMENTS

- a. No monument shall be erected on less than two joining lots, which should be of natural granite and not less than two and one-half feet in height. All existing monuments can remain.

8. TEMPORARY PLAQUES

- a. Some funeral homes put a temporary plaque in the dirt after the grave closing. This is not meant to be a permanent marker.

- b. **CITY'S POSITION:** The City is not responsible for damage to temporary markers. The caretaker will not remove them for maintenance. In the course of regular cemetery maintenance (moving, aeration, etc.) it is possible that these markers could be damaged. These markers, in no way, are considered permanent markers and cannot be cemented into the ground.

9. FOUNDATIONS

- a. All foundations must be made of concrete. No stone foundations are allowed. All concrete work must be completed as fast as possible under the inspection of the caretaker and materials not used, must be removed as the work is completed. All foundations shall be as follows:
 - (1.) 12" depth for all monuments, with an 8" collar extending all around.
 - (2.) 6" depth for all headstones or markers, with an 8" collar extending all around.
 - (3.) The concrete must extend the full width of the grave or whatever distance is required to connect it to an adjacent foundation.
 - (4.) No monument, slab, coping, curbing, hedging or enclosure of any nature will be permitted in a single grave row.
 - (5.) All concrete used must meet city specifications. (4000 PSI/6.5 bag)
 - (6.) Substandard concrete work will be replaced at installer's expense, within an acceptable period of time.

10. FLORAL VASES

- a. Veteran Sections – Section C & Section J
 - (1.) Floral PVC vases will be installed in the concrete foundation of the upright white marble stone when the stone is set.
 - (2.) One vase per stone installed and centered on the left (north) side, nine inches (9) from edge of stone to center of vase.
- b. Remaining Sections of Cemetery
 - (1.) No floral vases allowed in foot stones.
 - (2.) Only removable flower pot holders will be allowed to be installed in the concrete foundation. These vases must be installed at the time the concrete foundation is poured. (If done afterwards, there is too great a risk that it will crack the foundation and would then require replacement of the foundation.)
 - (3.) The only other option for the flower vase is to re-pour the entire concrete foundation and have the stone reset.
 - (4.) Vases must be placed on the north/south ends of the stone, even when using just one vase.

11. FLORAL POLICY - *The rule of thumb is: "If it is not a flower, don't leave it."*

- a. Flowers
 - (1). The gravesite is allowed a maximum of two flower containers for floral arrangements. The cost of the floral containers shall be paid by the family and/or the estate of the deceased.
 - (2). Flowers are allowed at any time for placement on gravesites in the floral containers. Flowers will be removed from gravesites when they become unsightly. Only fresh cut flowers, artificial flowers and plants, which can be inserted into the on-site floral containers, shall be allowed.
- b. No plantings of any type are permitted on cemetery grounds or on grave sites, other than those included in the landscape design of the cemetery. No potted plants, wreaths, flags, shepherd hooks, emblems, or other forms of decorative articles are permitted on grave sites, unless specifically authorized during defined holidays.
- c. Grave blankets of any size are not permitted.
- d. Christmas decorations and wreaths (18" in diameter or smaller) shall be permitted on graves beginning December 15th and shall be removed by cemetery personnel no earlier than January 15th.
- e. Wreaths and/or floral arrangements are permitted the week before and week after Memorial Day. Cemetery personnel will remove them the Monday following Memorial Day. To honor the veterans, wreaths and arrangements are also allowed in Veteran Sections C & J for the Veteran's Day holiday. Cleanup of this section will be the Monday following Veteran's Day.
- f. Flags may be placed on each veteran's grave in Veteran Sections C and J by veterans' organizations, only for the Memorial Day observance and will be removed at the end of the week. Any flag found on a grave other than the Memorial Day observance will be removed.
- g. Unacceptable items are: statues, vigil lights, permanent plantings, any glass object, commemorative items, memorabilia, pinwheels, balloons, any political affiliated items or signs, shepherd hooks and any grave decoration over 18 inches. The cemetery does not permit adornments which are considered offensive, inconsistent with the dignity of the cemetery or considered hazardous to cemetery personnel; examples are beads, wires, twine and string which may become entangled in mowers or other equipment and cause injuries.

12. TREES, SHRUBS & GRASS

- a. The cutting, breaking of, or injury to the trees, shrubs, grass or other plantings on the cemetery grounds are not permitted.
- b. Donations may be made for purchase of trees, but may only be planted in designated areas under the direction of the Public Works Department. The Tree Board and PWD determine the type of trees that will be planted.

13. GENERAL INFORMATION:

- a. Regular graves 4' x 10'
"Walk-way" graves in old sections 6' x 10'
Baby graves in designated "baby sections"..... 3' x 5'
Walkways between rows of graves (North/South) 6'
Cremation sections 4' x 5'
- b. A full grave is dug 4'x 8', starting at the foot of the grave. The remaining two feet at the head of the grave is left undisturbed for headstone placement.
- c. In the case of stillborn infants under 20 weeks gestation and no death certificate, the following rules apply:
 - (1.) The city requires a minimum of a fiberglass box, minimum size of 10"x10"x 6" and a maximum size of 12" x12"x12".
 - (2.) Verification from a doctor of stillborn infant.
 - (3.) No activity will take place without the city's knowledge.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

City of Laurel
115 W. First Street
PO Box 10
Laurel, MT 59044

City Hall hours: Monday – Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

City Clerk’s Office - (406) 628-7431
Public Works Department – (406) 628-4796

For information and to schedule a burial, call the City Clerk’s office.