



Crematory Study Committee

Minutes October 7, 2009

Present: Joe Knox, Cathy Case, Jeff Boone, Peter Yapp, Charlie Ellis, Richard Crowley. Also present Peter Cassanari. Absent: Dick Montminy, Marry Gosby, Steve DeSisto

Meeting started at 10:00 AM and ended at 12:15

We met with Ted Bubbins, Plymouth Cemetery, Crematory, Parks and Forestry Superintendent

1. Plymouth began the process of establishing a crematory 10 years ago. They made a lot of initial progress, but then had not properly bid the design phase of the project and had to go back and restart. There were also changes in Cemetery Superintendant, and one of the interim superintendants was not a supporter. They also needed to go back to town meeting twice to get additional funding, as the costs rose over the time period.
2. Business numbers look right on target, bond could be completely paid in 5 years.
3. Did early promotions with Funeral Directors, target area Plymouth to Cape.
4. \$250/cremation Duxbury was \$230 now going to \$250
5. Duxbury putting in new retorts
6. Hired established Cremation specialist
7. Retort needs maintenance every 1000 hours
8. DEP limits cremations per day on approval paperwork from the DEP
9. DEP has never come to the Crematory. Since getting the approval Plymouth has just been sending in the paperwork saying they were not operational. Now that they are (4 months ago), they will send in the reports with the number of cremations.
10. 1st Cremation was May 21st, Matthews was present for first couple days
11. Took 1 year for legislative approval for a town to operate a crematory (Gottberg from BSC helped with this part of the process)

12. Plymouth has 2 standard Matthews Power-Pak 1 Retorts[although the Plymouth SOP says Power-Pak 2], room for 2 more. They have the units that automatically control the temperature throughout the process, and recommend automatic controls over the manual controls.
13. Ted would not recommend going into the business with less than 2 units.
14. Capacity 4 cremations a day per unit
15. Open 5 ½ days
16. Their building is 3000 sq. ft on one level, with additional storage space upstairs.
17. Average 20 per week with capacity for 44 a week.
18. Cold Storage 12 x 16 12 cases, using saw horses now, waiting to buy racks. Have had 6 bodies in the storage max so far. Business is definitely cyclical.
19. They ask Funeral Directors to call first, but many still just come during business hours to drop off without calling.
20. No backup generator. Since they have been in business they have lost power twice.
21. Gas supply is 2" pipe, no available gas usage records available
22. Did have some residential negative reaction
23. There was Town Meeting opposition to the crematory. The main complaint was why should the town get into this business. The initial idea behind the project was for it to be a big money maker, which they now realize isn't true, but should be enough to cover the cemetery maintenance expenses along with their \$1 million perpetual care account, which generates about \$60k interest per year.
24. Other concerns at Town Meeting were about smoke, smell, having to look at it, and smoke filling the valley the cemetery is located in.
25. Dave Crispin helped with the town meeting concerns.
26. They have had a foginess surround the cemetery on a few occasions – they are in a valley and expected this could happen.
27. Machines built to burn off all gases
28. There is a little smoke at times, but 99% of the time nothing. [Just FYI: if 1% is even right, it is still 30 minutes of visible smoke a week]
29. Staff is Superintendent, Operator (\$50,000) range, Administrative Assistance (also for Cemetery)
30. There is a lot of paperwork for every cremation.
31. Wanted and would still like a backup/second operator for sick days, vacations, etc.
32. All Staff trained to be operator
33. Ted went to operator training at Matthews in Florida, which was free, except for travel expenses, and to CANA certification training in Arizona.
34. Staff went to CANA training certification at Mt. Ida Jr. College in MA as well as to Matthews in FL.
35. Ted said the biggest asset to starting up the crematory was hiring an Operator from Forest Hills Crematory, who had 20 years experience doing cremations.

36. Hiring this cremationist also gave them someone who already knew all the funeral home directors, which has helped.
37. Grounds people play no part in Cremations. Even if trained they would not be the right people to deal with greeting families and funeral directors.
38. When they started looking into a Crematory 31% of the population was being cremated, now 36% in Plymouth area
39. Duxbury told Plymouth they have never been fined.
40. They cremate artificial hips, joints, etc, but pacemakers are supposed to be removed.
41. Medical examiner examines some bodies at the funeral home and some at the crematory, where this is supposed to be checked.
42. The medical examiner has stopped a few cremations (saw something he didn't like or wanted to look into more).
43. Ashes taken to processing table where metals are removed. They separate the metal screws and brackets from the titanium and other metal prosthetics, which they can recycle for cash. They had a big bucket of each after 2 months.

44. Crematory has the right to refuse body. They refused a 600lb body – felt it was too big for their units, designed for 300-350lbs max. Power-Pak 2's can handle bigger bodies.
45. They will accept cremations from individuals as well as funeral home directors. They have done 1 of these so far.
46. Plymouth monies go into general fund, although Plymouth cemetery would prefer an enterprise fund
47. Plymouth used BSC (Robert Gottberg and Dave Crispin to advise them on the business, the permitting processes, and to help build a presentation for the town on the crematory. They were very happy with the services.
48. Ted went to RI, NH, Duxbury, and several other MA crematories before the project to learn all he could about the business
49. May 21st, 2009 was their first cremation
50. Machines require maintenance every 1000 hours.
51. There were rigging and crane costs beyond the quote from Matthews. Need to plan how units will get into the building (need 8' x 8' opening)
52. Matthews setup the machines and was there for 4-5 days and the first cremations. Plymouth was very happy with Matthews.
53. There is a spare parts list for the equipment which they need to keep available to avoid longer repairs delays.
54. One chart keeps temperature during cremation, one counts particulates
55. Charts are kept on file in crematory, only summary reports are sent into DEP.
56. The cremationist said anything about 10ppm was a violation. We asked about several readings on the chart from the previous day that went into the 20's. He said yes that could be a violation but it was likely just due to the casket burning up quickly. When this happens you cannot really control it. It usually just lowers by itself quickly once the casket or cardboard box is consumed.

57. If levels are exceeded they are supposed to notify DEP, and then DEP responds. It is up to DEP how to handle or fine.
58. DEP can do random inspections. In the cremationist's 20 years of experience at Forest Hills Cemetery, this has happened about 8 times.
59. The viewing room should have a side view and not an end view.
60. What really matters with emissions is the operator.