



CITY OF BLAIR

MEMORANDUM

To: Blair Cemetery, Parks, and Recreation Advisory Board
From: CJ Heaton, Deputy City Administrator of Public Works
Date: 4/28/26
Re: 100-Year Cemetery Project

A recently passed law in the Nebraska Legislature allows cemeteries to reclaim and resell any graves that have not had activity within the last 30 years. Several cemeteries in the state were dealing with the issue of running out of ground, but had hundreds of unused spaces. This new law allows cemeteries to properly post the spaces they propose to claim through public notice, and a 60-day waiting period to allow anyone who may have a claim to step forward. The City of Blair began evaluating what spaces fall into this new law, but did so on spaces that were purchased 100 years ago, to allow ample time for anyone to have used these spaces. Several spaces were purchased well over 100 years ago, where a family would buy 12 or more spaces, planning on other family members using the spaces. Over time, families moved from the area, married, or were buried elsewhere. At other times, staff find that the proper documentation to show the proper transfer of a space from generation to generation is lacking or was never filled out in the first place. Grave spaces are property and must show a proper transfer of title for someone other than the owner to use the space. While these can be worked through, they often require attorneys and can be costly. In some cases, there are three or more generations after the original purchaser, and there may be dozens of descendants who have a claim. This new law will allow the city to reclaim and potentially resell thousands of lots over the next few years, allowing for more infill at the cemetery, and allowing the descendants of some of Blair's oldest families an opportunity to purchase spaces near relatives.

Attached is a list of nearly 2600 spaces that were purchased prior to 1926 and meet the requirements of the new law. Staff is seeking the board's recommendation to present this to the full council on the 28th so that we can publish in the Enterprise and begin the process.

Financial Impact: NA

Recommendation: Approval and recommendation of passage to the Blair Mayor and City Council.