



Administration and Operations Committee Report

To: The Chair and Members of the Administration and Operations Committee
From: D.J. Hussey, Supervisor of Parks & Cemeteries
Date: July 15, 2025
Report #: RPT-0134-25
Subject: Upgrade Cemetery Management Software
Purpose: For Approval

Recommendation

That RPT-0134-25 Upgrade Cemetery Management Software be received as information;
And that \$75,000 for the purchase of a replacement Cemetery Management Software, be approved and funded from the Community Services Capital Reserve.

Strategic Plan Priority

Strategic Priority 4 - Stable and Responsive Governance

Impacts and Mitigation

Social Impacts

Cemeteries offer a safe and accepting environment for experiencing grief and facilitating the healing process. The physical acts of visiting a grave, leaving flowers, or just sitting quietly can provide a constructive outlet for grief and a tangible way to remember and honor the deceased. Having good quality and consistent maintenance practices in all County of Brant active and inactive cemeteries assists with positive interactions amongst staff and those who visit the cemetery.

Environmental Impacts

Cemeteries provide green space, habitat for birds and other animals as well as a wide range of ecosystem services, like improving air quality.

Economic Impacts

A one-time capital cost of \$75,000 is being requested to purchase the new software, including the cost of importing all of our current records and maps into the new system. The software is subject to an annual fee of approximately \$10,000 that has already been allocated in the 2025 Operating Budget.

Report

Background

The County of Brant currently owns and operates thirty-seven (37) cemeteries. Out of these cemeteries, ten (10) are active. All active and inactive cemeteries require ground maintenance, monument restoration (health and safety) and record searches for the public register.

From an administrative and operational perspective, the management of active cemeteries is both time-consuming and complex. Administrative and operational tasks, include but are not limited to, interment right sales and mapping, burial contracts, scheduling, monument placement, historical record searches, plot and monument staking, fees and charges review, family transfers of interment rights, annual reporting to the Bereavement Authority of Ontario (BAO), site preparation for interments and grounds maintenance.

Currently, County cemeteries are managed with a mix of paper and scanned records dating back to the 1800s. The current cemetery management software (Stone Orchard) is nearing its end-of-life and does not allow for all data to be stored in one place. Upgrading the current cemetery management software will improve timelines for searches for both records and mapping. Staff spend significant time working with families and funeral homes to fill gaps in interment right records. Updating to the new software offers staff (and potentially members of the public) access to cemetery information on their mobile devices.

Analysis

An upgrade to the Cemetery Software will allow for in-person and online sales, records management, more user-friendly public engagement and maintenance tracking with an emphasis on ease of use for all users. The software will provide reporting functionality for staff in compliance with regulations under the Funeral, Burial, and Cremation Services Act, 2002.

As the current software is at the end of its useful life, the County is at risk of the system failing and/or lack of product support. The proposed new software system will improve efficiencies, increase customer service capabilities and free up staff-time for other operation and maintenance activities.

Summary and Recommendations

The Cemetery Division requires an upgrade to its existing Cemetery Management Software to maintain the current level-of-service. The new software system will enable staff to improve search timelines and search remotely, resulting in an improved level-of-service for its residents. In addition, much of Brant's history is commemorated by the settlers that rest in our cemeteries, which will be available in one place once the transfer of data is complete into the new software system.

It is recommended that RPT-0134-25 Upgrade Cemetery Management Software be received and that \$75,000 from Capital Reserves be approved to fund the purchase of a replacement Cemetery Management Software and the associated data imports.

Attachments

N/A

Reviewed By

Phil Mete, General Manager of Community Services
Stacey Ellins, Director of Parks and Recreation

Copied To

Heather Mifflin, Director of Finance, Treasurer
James Rickert, Director of Business & Technology Solutions

By-law and/or Agreement

By-law Required	No
Agreement(s) or other documents to be signed by Mayor and /or Clerk	No