

Clayton County Pioneer Cemetery Commission

Meeting: April 11, 2026

The meeting of the Clayton County Pioneer Cemetery Commission was called to order shortly after 9:00 a.m. at the Carter House in Elkader.

All members of the commission were in attendance for this meeting: Chairperson Lee Embretson and commission members David Beck, Paul Young, Ellen Collins and Bruce Collins.

The first order of business was to determine if our commission was to take a road trip today to the Hamlett Cemetery in Elk Township. It was decided to postpone that trip to another time primarily waiting for warmer and more favorable weather conditions.

For the agenda for this meeting David Beck made a motion to approve the agenda as presented, Ellen Collins seconded the motion and the motion passed.

The minutes from our last meeting were reviewed and summarized by Secretary Bruce Collins, and a motion was made by David Beck to approve the minutes, Ellen Collins seconded the motion and the motion passed.

For the Treasurer's Report, Bruce Collins reported that the Auditor's Office shows a balance of \$1,199.25, which is the same as last month, but the commission's report shows a balance of \$1,162.11, the discrepancy being \$37.80 related to mileage disbursements. Followup with the Auditor's Office will be done on this.

The commission's funds at Freedom Bank remain the same as last month, \$1,424.21.

Chairperson Lee Embretson submitted a bill from Clay Bolsinger and his company, Tri-State Tombstone TLC, for \$567.10 related to repair work done on gravestones for the Barnum-King Cemetery. David Beck made a motion to pay the bill, Ellen Collins seconded the motion and the motion passed.

Eastman Cemetery

Bruce Collins reported on his discussions with County Attorney Zach Herrmann related to Eastman Cemetery.

(For background purposes—Our commission learned last fall that no mowing or other maintenance was done at the Eastman Cemetery during the 2025 season and commission member Bruce Collins wanted to explore getting the township, Mendon Township, involved in caring for this cemetery. Bruce also had questions related to easement access to the cemetery. Thus the following on all of this from the county attorney)

Related to the cemetery, Zach wrote “No one knows exactly who owns the cemetery.” He also wrote “The Pioneer Cemetery Commission is responsible for maintenance since.” Various sections of Iowa Code were cited to support this statement.

Related to an easement to the cemetery, Zach reported that no legal documents could be found but we would have good legal ground to obtain an easement if it was needed.

The consensus of our commission was—we would be responsible for maintenance at Eastman Cemetery and we would not raise any issues related to the easement since there have been no problems to this point of accessing the cemetery.

Paul Young said that Ethan Pitzer from a Boy Scout Troop will do the mowing at Eastman and it was the consensus of our commission that we would reimburse him for mileage and any other out of pocket expenses incurred for doing this project. *(Thank you Ethan!)*

Gravestone Setting—Barnum King

Lee Embretson reported that the gravestones Clay Bolsinger worked on are ready to be set in the cemetery. Lee said that Mr. Bolsinger is not comfortable (has little experience) doing this work and we need to look to other providers. It was the general consensus that Lee, David and Paul would work together, contact the other providers whose names they have, and arrange to have the stones set in the cemetery in a manner they deemed

appropriate. *(This work will probably cost much more than the remaining \$600 available in this year's county fiscal budget, but it would be good to have at least that much work done on this project this fiscal year to avoid having those funds disappear.)*

Related to grounds maintenance at Barnum-King, Ellen Collins noted the property got very overgrown last year before it was mowed and she would like to have that overgrown look prevented this year. Lee Embretson said he would talk to Tyler Carlson about having it mowed.

McClelland Sign

At our last meeting Lee Embretson suggested the possibility of having a sign along the roadway about the historical significance of the McClelland Cemetery in the middle of the adjacent field behind where the sign would be placed.

Bruce Collins presented a draft for the wording on the proposed McClelland sign. That was reviewed with some corrections and additions noted. Bruce Collins will get a price quote for such a sign to have that available for our next meeting. Lee Embretson will contact the owner of the land to see if there would be any objections the field owner may have with placing a sign along the perimeter of their property.

USA 250th Anniversary Commemoration

Ellen Collins said there are special commemorative flags being made for the 250th USA celebration and it would be good to have one of those flags in the cemetery where David Beck will be portraying the soldier from the War of 1812 buried there.

David Beck said he would follow-up and order a commemorative flag to use at the cemetery during his presentation, which is June 27th at Reed Cemetery in Sperry Township

Next Meeting

Our next meeting was tentatively scheduled for May 9th or possibly May 16th depending on the weather and the spring planting situation.

At that time maybe a field trip will be made either to Hamlett or Shori Cemeteries.

Motions were made and passed to adjourn this meeting at 10:05.

Bruce Collins
Sec/Treasurer
CCPCC