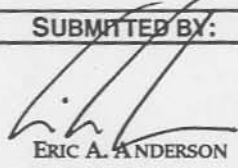


OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER  
DES MOINES, IOWA

CITY COUNCIL COMMUNICATION 96-025  
JANUARY 15, 1996 AGENDA

SUBJECT:	TYPE:	PREPARED BY:	SUBMITTED BY:
CEMETERY COMMITTEE EVALUATION REPORT	◆ RESOLUTION ORDINANCE RECEIVE/FILE	DONALD TRIPP PARK & RECREATION DEPARTMENT	 ERIC A. ANDERSON CITY MANAGER

**SYNOPSIS —**

A special Cemetery Evaluation Committee has prepared a report based on a comprehensive review of cemetery operations and conditions.

**FISCAL IMPACT —**

Implementation of the recommendations will result in a significant increase in overall cemetery revenues. It is anticipated that the amount will meet and eventually exceed the present \$300,000 shortfall required for self-sufficiency of both cemetery operations and capital improvements.

**RECOMMENDATION —**

Approval of the report and recommendations.

**BACKGROUND —**

Early last year, members of the City Council expressed concerns that the City's cemetery operations were not self-supporting.

At its May 9, 1995 meeting, the Park and Recreation Board directed that a Cemetery Evaluation Committee be formed to review a draft of a proposal to hire a cemetery management consultant. The Committee, however, decided to postpone the hiring of a consultant in favor of initiating an internal evaluation of current cemetery operations, and recommend changes which might increase operational efficiency and/or generate additional revenues. This committee met over the period of May-November, 1995, and comprehensively reviewed several operational aspects of the City's cemeteries. At the conclusion of the study, a report was prepared of its findings and recommendations (see roll call).

- Key elements of the recommendations include:

- 1) Increased cemetery fees and charges (phased);
- 2) An aggressive marketing/sales program;
- 3) Implementation and staff training of computer applications;
- 4) Use of contract services where economically reasonable;
- 5) Periodic review/update of cemetery rules;
- 6) Construction of garden-style mausoleums and niches;
- 7) Vandalism prevention measures;
- 8) Investigation/visits of other successful municipalities' cemetery operations;
- 9) Non-resident fee elimination;
- 10) A revised management approach which uses both City and contract services;

- 11) Review of planning and work schedules; and
- 12) Revise policies regarding temporary labor hiring practices.

On January 9, 1996, by Resolution #11655, the Park and Recreation Board approved the Cemetery Evaluation Committee recommendations.