

February 28, 2024

Dear Newfane Selectboard,

I am writing to you as the President of the Newfane Village Cemetary Association to ask for ARPA funds. All money will be used to repair and keep up memorials and grounds for many of our local ancestors, as well as future residents who choose to join them. Our Association covers both the Hill and Woodlawn cemeteries and our goal is to keep them in decent and respectful shape.

Other than mowing the grounds there has been no major work done on either cemetery in about 50 years. The Hill Cemetery (on Cemetery Hill) opened in 1812 and still has a few open spaces. The Woodlawn Cemetery is active with many people still living who choose to be memorialized there someday. We are planning to make the Hill Cemetery active again by mapping out new lots for cremation memorials. We need to figure that out, but we already have 6 Newfaners signed up.

When the Civil War soldiers went to Gettysburg and elsewhere to fight for the north, many of them were sons of farmers in Vermont, specifically Newfane. Many of these men are buried in the Hill Cemetery and are in danger of sliding down the steep banks and onto the road. Four of the large retaining walls need to be fixed. Thanks to The Vermont Old Cemetery Association and The Stone Trust in Dummerston, we have found a civic minded stone-builder who will work this summer to rebuild the walls.

The vault where Jonathan Fields, who donated the Newfane Commons to the Children of Newfane is buried, has holes in it and is falling in. 200 years, hurricanes and bad weather have taken a toll. Mr. Field's vision for the future of his hometown made Newfane what it is. Keeping his final resting spot in good shape is the least we can do for such a generous and proud Newfaner.

I'm always surprised at the number of visitors to both cemeteries. Railroad History people always want to visit all the West River Valley luminaries memorialized in the Hill Cemetery. We need to fix the 250-year-old steps so that it's safe for them and to walk up and pay their respects. As many as 35 gravestones need to be fixed and made to stand up. Brush needs to be cut back along with general maintenance. Trees that have fallen on gravestones need to be chain-sawed up. Volunteers do a lot of work and will continue to do work but supplies cost money. We have decided to hire a professional to cut down some of the more problematic trees that are hanging over and on graves.

We are lucky to have a great bunch of volunteers that will help this summer to do the work. Our board that consists of Win and Lou Clark, Norman Holden, Bobby Litchfield and Gregg Record will be there to lend their expertise too. The Vermont Old Cemetery Association representative for Windham County, Charlie Marchant, has said he will advise me on how to orchestrate a couple of workdays. Between the supplies, equipment and professional help on trees and retaining walls, funds are needed.

Thanks for considering The Newfane Cemetary Association. I welcome you to come visit our cemeteries at any time. We are asking for \$5000 to help repair the Woodlawn and Hill Cemeteries for Newfane's next round of ancestors to stop in.

Sincerely,

Henriette Mantel, President