

COBB COUNTY RETIRED EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

MINUTES

JULY 16, 2012

The monthly meeting of the Cobb County retired Employees Association was held on Monday, July 16, 2012 at the West Cobb Senior Center with 60 members in attendance. President Story called the meeting to order at 10:35 A.M.

INVOCATION: The invocation was given by Melvin Holton followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Two new members were present as follows:

Frances Brice from the Sheriff's Department
Phil Hungate from the Tax Assessors Department

Also, Rick Benites from the Sheriff's Department was present

SPEAKER: President Story introduced our guest speaker Chris Messina, General Manager, West Cobb Funeral Home and Crematory. Mr. Messina graduated from Osborne High School in 1986, Southern Tech and the Gupton-Jones College in Atlanta. He was employed at Winkenhofer-McCurdy Funeral Home in Smyrna, then Winkenhofer Funeral Home and Crematory, Pine Ridge from 1991 til 2005.

Mr. Messina stated it is an honor and privilege to be here. He said he has a soft spot for Cobb County as he is a life-long resident. He explained that caring for the remains of the dead is the oldest profession there is in the history of mankind dating back to biblical times and first mentioned in the Book of Genesis.

He shared a short personal story that when a family member died and during visitation he asked his father if he had given any thought to pre-planning his funeral when the time comes and his dad replied 'just take care of me'. A lot of people feel this same way but it is so much easier on the family if there is pre-planning in place. He said we plan for marriage, children, vacations, etc. so why not death and encouraged everyone to write out instruction to ease the burden on the family.

Cremation is not new but going back on thousands of years and has increased close to 50% in the last ten years. Why do people choose cremation when cemetery plots have already been purchased? People change their mind sometimes because of religious convictions, the Catholic Church and public is more open now concerning cremation than in the past and also the cost could be a factor. A funeral can cost from \$10,000 to \$15,000 dollars whereas, cremation can cost between \$2,000 and \$3,000 dollars. Its up to us to decide.

Mr. Messina stated the Tri-State Crematory incident in Northwest Georgia was a disaster for the industry. However, one positive thing did happen because of it. The State of Georgia adopted some good regulations for crematories which had been lacking in the past. There are 8 to 10 funeral homes in Cobb County that now have their own crematories and out-sourcing is no longer a necessity.

Mr. Messina said there have been rumors (overstated) that there is a lack of space in cemeteries

but these rumors are unfounded and there is plenty of land in cemeteries to accommodate the burial of a loved one. Everyone needs to be remembered and the subject of death cannot be ignored as death is 100%.

William Gladstone said that a Nation or a community can be judged by the manner in which they take care of their dead.

Mr. Messina answered a few questions regarding funerals and cremations. He stated there are 2 to 3 thousand cremations a year in Cobb County. Some scatter the ashes or the urn becomes personal property and held by the family. There is no requirement for embalming by the State of Georgia except in case of a public viewing. A Medical Examiner becomes involved when there is an accident or other unusual circumstances.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Judy Clark reported a balance of \$6,539.93. Motion was made with a second to approve this report. Motion carried.

MINUTES: A motion was made with a second to approve the Minutes of June 2012 meeting as presented. Motion was made with a second to approve. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS: Anyone interested in drivers training class, please sign up. Insurance companies offer a discount for anyone taking this class.

Also, President Story announced that Tony Hagler, Cobb County Human Resources Director will be at the September 2012 meeting to talk further about the proposal presented to the Board of Commissioners concerning insurance program that will affect all members on Medicare.

NEXT MEETING: Our next meeting will be August 20, 2012 for our Bar-B-Que luncheon beginning at 11:00 A.M.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:40 A. M.

Respectfully submitted,

Louise Anderson for
Martha Watson, Secretary

