

Cemetery board requests financial help from city

**(KNZA)--Representatives of the Hiawatha Cemetery Society Board met with the City Commission Monday evening to request financial assistance from the city for 2018.**

**Board member Dave Wilson told the Commission they need \$20,000 for continued maintenance of the cemetery grounds.**

**The city provided \$5,200 to the cemetery board last September to help them finish out 2017.**

**The cemetery, located on the north edge of Hiawatha, has existed since the city was founded in 1857. Since that time, the cemetery has operated with private funds and no tax dollars. However, those funds have dried up.**

**Commissioner Bill Collins says he thinks the cemetery board needs to look at other avenues of funding besides the city. Collins says the city needs all the dollars it has to address its own problems.**

**Mayor Steffen Shamburg says the city doesn't want to take over operation of the cemetery.**

**Both Shamburg and Collins appealed for public donations to the cemetery.**

**Following discussion, the Commission voted to provide up to \$20,000 in incremental payments to the cemetery society for this year.**

**City Attorney Andy Delaney and City Administrator Mike Nichols will work with the cemetery board on future funding for the cemetery—including the possible formation of a cemetery district that would have taxing authority on its own. Delaney says that would require a petition signed by at least 51 percent of the qualified electors in the proposed district.**