



TO: Honorable Mayor & Members of the Fort Lauderdale City Commission

FROM: Rickelle Williams, City Manager

DATE: April 7, 2026

TITLE: Resolution Waiving the Competitive Solicitation and Selection Processes and Authorizing the City Manager or the City Manager’s designee to Negotiate a Service Agreement with PlotBox, Inc., to Provide Cemetery Software Services - **(Commission Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4)**

Recommendation

Staff recommends the City Commission adopt a resolution waving the competitive solicitation and selection processes and authorizing the City Manager or the City Manager’s designee to negotiate a service agreement with PlotBox, Inc., for the implementation and ongoing provision of a comprehensive Cemetery Management Software System (CMSS).

Background

The City of Fort Lauderdale, through the Parks and Recreation Department, operates a public municipal cemetery system consisting of four (4) cemeteries: North Woodlawn, Evergreen, Sunset Memorial Gardens, and Lauderdale Memorial Park with approximately 99,000 plots. Of the four (4) cemeteries, three (3) are active. North Woodlawn, a historically significant African American burial ground, which was acquired by the City in 2002, does not have any records of interment for the property and is maintained solely for grounds preservation purposes. The table below summarizes the municipal cemetery inventory as of 2026. The inventory does not reflect future capital improvement projects of mausoleums at Lauderdale Memorial Park and Sunset Memorial Gardens.

Cemetery	Current Available Space	Estimated Timeframe
Sunset Memorial Gardens	Plots: No Availability Mausoleums: No Availability	N/A – At full capacity
Lauderdale Memorial Park	Plots: 8,500 Mausoleums: No Availability	10 – 15 Years to full capacity
Evergreen	Plots: 400 Mausoleums: Not Applicable	5 – 7 Years to full capacity
North Woodlawn Cemetery	Plots: No Availability Mausoleums: No Availability	N/A – At full capacity

The cemetery system was managed by a third-party vendor from April 1993 - September 2018. The system has been self-managed by the City of Fort Lauderdale since October 1, 2018. The Cemetery Division has forty (40) full-time employees with an annual operating budget of \$8.55 million. To optimize performance and mitigate future challenges, it was identified that the City needs to implement a CMSS to centralize, log, and manage the historical and future cemetery records.

During the transition process from the third-party managed system (to the City managed system) in Fiscal Year (FY) 2019, the City did not receive access to the third-party vendor's cemetery management software, resulting in a return to manual, paper-based administrative processes for burial records, ownership documentation, and customer service functions. To address these inefficiencies, the Department pursued the implementation of CMSS to support cemetery operations.

In October 2020, the City entered into an agreement with Site Industries, LLC, (d/b/a "CemSites"), for a CMSS. The implementation encountered significant challenges and was suspended in November 2021. A subsequent assessment was conducted in August 2024, by the City's Information Technology Services (ITS) Department, which confirmed that the implementation did not meet the City's standards or operational needs. As a result, the City Commission approved termination of the CemSites agreement for convenience at the March 4, 2025, City Commission Regular Meeting (CAM #25-0230).

The Cemetery Division continues to operate in a manual environment consisting of paper files, physical record books, scanned documents, and multiple excel spreadsheets used to track interments, plot ownership, inventory availability, and financial activity.

At the February 18, 2025, City Commission Conference Meeting, the City Auditor's Office presented a performance audit of Cemetery Administration (CAM #25-0204). The audit, attached as Exhibit 2, identified five (5) findings that included two (2) key findings associated with the need for a CMSS:

- Finding 1: Absence of a comprehensive internal controls system; and
- Finding 2: Absence of an adequate recordkeeping system.

As part of broader modernization efforts, the Cemetery Division began facilitating the digitization and preservation of vital cemetery records in 2025. This initiative includes the procurement of professional document scanning services and the purchase of scanning equipment to convert approximately 2 million paper documents into secure digital formats. To date, digitization of records for Evergreen Cemetery has been completed with Lauderdale Memorial Park and Sunset Memorial Gardens in progress.

In January 2026, the Cemetery Division, in collaboration with the ITS, Finance, and Procurement Services Departments, issued a Request for Information (RFI) to qualified and experienced firms. The RFI allowed staff to gather detailed information on modern CMSS, including system capabilities, security, data management, integration, and

implementation approaches. Five (5) vendors responded to the RFI:

- Two (2) vendors did not offer solutions specifically designed for cemetery operations and therefore did not meet the City's functional requirements;
- One (1) vendor had previously failed to meet the City's implementation expectations, resulting in contract termination in March 2025;
- One (1) vendor lacked key security certifications, including International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 27001 and Payment Card Industry (PCI) compliance, which are critical to the City's data security and payment processing standards; and
- One (1) vendor, PlotBox, emerged as the preferred vendor fully aligned with the City's operational, technical, and compliance requirements.

PlotBox, Inc. is recommended as the preferred vendor by the Cemetery Division following extensive due diligence, including prior procurement efforts through the RFI process, multiple vendor demonstrations, cross-departmental evaluation and participation from the Cemetery System Board of Trustees. Through this process, PlotBox, Inc. distinguished itself as the purpose-built solution capable of meeting the City's operational complexity, structure, and fiduciary requirements, particularly with respect to accounts receivable and financial controls. PlotBox, Inc. demonstrated an integrated platform specifically designed for municipal cemetery systems, and the ability to seamlessly integrate large-scale digitized records. Additionally, PlotBox, Inc. currently provides services to multiple municipal cemetery systems, including several municipalities in Florida (City of Boynton Beach, City of Plant City, and City of Winter Haven). Collectively, this level of market testing and evaluation confirms that PlotBox, Inc. represents the most qualified, lowest-risk, and best-value solution available to the City.

In addition to the Cemetery Division's recommendation, ITS recommends PlotBox, Inc. as the preferred vendor based on its comprehensive, purpose-built cemetery management platform, ease of use, and strong alignment with the Cemetery Division's operational needs. The solution consolidates records, mapping, and workflows into a single system, improving efficiency, data accuracy, and service delivery while reducing reliance on manual processes. PlotBox, Inc. maintains ISO 27001 and ISO 9001 standards certification and is currently in the process of completing its PCI self-attestation, further strengthening its security posture and alignment with the City's standards. In addition, PlotBox, Inc. has verbally committed to a roadmap to secure System and Organizational Controls (SOC) 2 type 2 certification. Based on existing compliance of ISO 27001 and ISO 9001 standards certification, Finance Department staff also support the purchase of the CMSS through PlotBox, Inc.

Given the ongoing challenges, time delays, and the associated risks, City staff recommend that the City Commission waive the procurement rules and authorize the City

Manager (or designee) to negotiate a service agreement with PlotBox, Inc., to provide a CMSS.

The proposed agreement with PlotBox, Inc. will include the full implementation of a comprehensive CMSS designed to modernize and centralize all cemetery operations. The system will provide end-to-end functionality, including core cemetery management (burial and ownership records, digital contracts, interment scheduling, and work order tracking), geographical information system (GIS)-based mapping and inventory control to prevent errors such as double-selling, and a fully integrated financial module with accounts receivable, installment billing, payment processing, and audit-ready reporting. The platform will also strengthen internal controls through role-based permissions, audit trails, and management dashboards, while supporting the City's ongoing digitization effort by integrating approximately 2 million records into a secure, cloud-based system.

The anticipated scope of work includes full enterprise deployment across all active cemeteries and administrative functions, including but not limited to:

Core Cemetery Management

- Centralized burial and ownership record management;
- Digital lot cards and contract storage;
- Real-time inventory tracking and availability controls;
- Interment scheduling and workflow management;
- Memorialization tracking and installation oversight;
- Pre-need and at-need contract management; and
- Tracking and management of work orders.

GIS Mapping & Inventory Control

- Interactive cemetery mapping;
- Visual plot availability and ownership layers;
- Prevention safeguards against double-selling; and
- Integration of digitized historical records.

Financial & Accounts Receivable Module

- Full accounts receivable tracking;

- Installment plan management;
- Payment processing integration;
- Automated invoicing and receipting;
- Financial reporting and reconciliation tools; and
- Audit-ready transaction logs.

Internal Controls & Governance

- Role-based user permissions;
- Segregation of duties functionality;
- Automated audit trails;
- Reporting dashboards for management oversight; and
- Data integrity and change tracking.

Data Migration & Integration

- Structured import of digitized records;
- Secure cloud hosting;
- Integration compatibility with City financial systems; and
- Long-term scalability and system support.

The Cemetery System Board of Trustees has expressed full support of a comprehensive cemetery management software system and has indicated willingness to fund the project through the Perpetual Care Trust Fund. Over the past year, the Board has remained actively engaged in the evaluation and modernization process, receiving regular updates from staff, participating in vendor demonstrations, and reviewing software capabilities in coordination with the Information Technology Services Department. The Board has consistently emphasized the importance of strengthening internal controls, improving recordkeeping, and reducing operational risk. Given the audit findings and the Cemetery Division's continued reliance on manual processes, the Board has articulated a clear desire to move forward with implementation as expeditiously as possible to protect the integrity and long-term sustainability of the cemetery system.

After negotiations are completed, a service agreement between the City of Fort Lauderdale and PlotBox, Inc. will be brought to a future City Commission Regular Meeting agenda for City Commission consideration.

Resource Impact

There is no fiscal impact associated with this action.

Strategic Connections

This is a FY 2026 Commission Priority, advancing Public Spaces and Cultural Initiatives.

This item supports the 2029 Strategic Plan, specifically advancing:

- The Public Places Focus Area, Goal 5: Build a beautiful and welcoming community.

This item advances the Fast Forward Fort Lauderdale 2035 Vision Plan: We are Here.

This item supports the Advance Fort Lauderdale 2040 Comprehensive Place specifically advancing:

- The Public Places Focus Area
- The Parks, Recreation & Open Spaces Area
- Goal 2: Be a community with high quality parks and recreational facilities that highlight the character of our city.

Attachments

Exhibit 1- Request For Information (RFI)

Exhibit 2 - Performance Audit of Cemeteries Administration

Exhibit 3 - Resolution

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