

# **UPDATE: Second round of subpoenas sent in Wanda Cemetery plot problems**

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer  
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**SOUTH ROXANA** – The South Roxana Police Department has issued another press release in regards to the Wanda Cemetery.

In March 2018, South Roxana Police Chief Bob Coles contacted the media and said his department was investigating “multiple inquiries” made to his office regarding that cemetery. The police opened an investigation after a village board member discovered a plot she had purchased for her husband had been resold. Coles said his investigation revealed similar things may have happened in the past.

At that time, Coles said cemetery supervisors were cooperating with authorities, stating in a previous release they were aware of the situation, but were unaware of how many times it could have happened in the past. As many as 6,000 plots exist within the cemetery, located at 915 Indiana Ave.

Coles said he passed the investigation to the Illinois Comptroller's Office, which confirmed in March they were investigating it, but said a 2010 state law mandated the case be handled by the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation.

“The Illinois Comptroller's Office is aware of the complaint and is working with local law enforcement, the cemetery's board and the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation,” a representative said in a text message in March. “If customers have concerns or questions, they can call our hotline at (877) 203-3401.

The Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation could neither confirm nor deny it was working on the investigation last March. Spokesperson Terry Horstman said the following:

“The Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation does not comment on investigations, or their existence, that have not yielded official department disciplinary action,” he said in an email. “IDFPR investigates all complaints of illegal or unprofessional conduct involving its regulated professions. Should an investigation yield instance of clear non-compliance with Illinois statute and rules, official action will be taken.”

In Thursday's press release, Coles said a second round of subpoenas were served today at the cemetery. He said more alleged victims have come forward to file further complaints against the cemetery.

“The majority of the new complaints advised they had tried to work the issues out with the cemetery themselves and not involve the police department,” Coles said in Thursday's release. “The complaints mentioned the cemetery remained uncooperative and refused to talk to the alleged victims over their lots, so they felt forced to come to the police department to resolve the issue.

“The police department has noticed a change in mentality with the cemetery when dealing with the cemetery over the complaints. The cemetery remained confrontational to the police and curse at the officer when serving the subpoena. The officer explained the reason the police department is seeking further records is more alleged victims have come forward filing a complaint against the cemetery.”

In previous interviews with Riverbender.com, former Wanda Cemetery Board Secretary Diana Williams said she was doing her best to assure people their lots were safe, adding the incident involving the South Roxana Village Board member and her husband's plot was likely an isolated incident. She could not comment on practices done by the cemetery prior to 2013 when she joined, however, before abruptly ending the call with a reporter.

Coles said at least two further families have come to his office with concerns about their lots in the cemetery, but did not yet wish to file complaints. He said he has also requested records from the Illinois Attorney General's Office hoping “it can provide critical information to the ongoing investigation.”

The South Roxana Police Department can be reached at (618) 254-7469. The Wanda Cemetery can be reached at (618) 254-2007.