



## **MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING OF NOVEMBER 22, 2022**

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE MADERA CEMETERY DISTRICT, HELD TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2022 AT 5:30 P.M. AT THE ARBOR VITAE CEMETERY LOCATED AT 1301 ROBERTS AVE., MADERA, CA 93637

### **TRUSTEES PRESENT:**

DAVID NEMETH  
CANDY TALLEY  
LOIS BETTY  
BELVA BARE

### **PUBLIC/EMPLOYEES PRESENT:**

ARTHUR GARDNER - DISTRICT MANAGER  
STEPHEN CLOETERS - H.R. GENERALIST  
TRACY ISAAK - OFFICE TECHNICIAN  
IGNACIO BECERRA - OPERATIONS MANAGER  
ROBERT ELLIS - FOREMAN  
LARRY MOORE - BERRY CONSTRUCTION

### **CALL TO ORDER:**

Chairperson David Nemeth called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

### **ROLL CALL OF BOARD:**

Chairperson David Nemeth took roll of the Board. Trustees David Nemeth, Lois Betty, and Belva Bare were present. Trustee Candy Talley arrived late. Maurice Cappelluti was excused for medical reasons.

### **PLEDGE TO THE FLAG:**

District Manager Arthur Gardner presented the flag.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT ON ANY AGENDA ITEM:**

None

### **CONSENT CALENDAR:**

Next meeting will be held December 13, 2022. Trustee Candy Talley moved to approve the consent calendar, Trustee Lois Betty seconded, and all were in favor.

### **RECESS TO CLOSED SESSION:**

Chairperson David Nemeth asked for a closed session.

### **RECONVENE TO OPEN SESSION - REPORT OF ANY ACTION TAKEN DURING**

Chairperson David Nemeth reported no action was taken.

**DISCUSSION/REPORT IF NEEDED ON OPERATIONS OF M.C.D. CEMETERIES:**

Operations Manager Ronnie Ramirez was not present. District Manager Arthur Gardner said the new pump would be placed the next day in the main well at Arbor Vitae. He did not know what the cost would be.

Trustee Lois Betty asked if there was a warrantee on the pump that went out.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION OF CAPC CONFERENCE TO BE HELD 3/23-25, 2023 IN SEASIDE, CA:**

Trustee Lois Betty said she could go. Trustee Belva Bare cannot go.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION ON NEW DISTRICT OFFICE AND ARBOR VITAE MAUSOLEUMS:**

Larry Moore from Berry Construction presented an update to the Board prior to the closed session.

Mr. Moore reported that the building had made it through the first plan check but that he hadn't received a list of items to be addressed yet. The project is coming in higher than projected because of the current market and subcontractors bidding higher than what was anticipated earlier in the year. Prevailing wages must be paid. The addition of the restroom and attached storage have increased the cost. Mr. Moore stated he will not accept further bids until after the next Board meeting in December.

The question of whether the new mausoleums would still include niches was raised. District Manager Arthur Gardner suggested they may not be needed because the current District office would be available to be converted to niche space.

The Board's design committee will make decisions on paint, flooring, countertops, etc.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION/APPROVAL OF SOLAR PROJECT:**

District Manager Arthur Gardner reported the application with PG&E is underway. Plans have been drafted and will be submitted soon for jurisdictional review. He is working with Verizon to coordinate the installation of high-speed internet, which is needed before GreenDay, the solar contractor will allow the project to proceed.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION OF ELECTRIC TOOLS & VEHICLES:**

The process of ordering the electric tools is done and we are simply waiting for them to come in.

The application for two Tuatara EV's and one Polaris EV has been submitted to San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District. No money can be paid until the application has been approved, otherwise, grant money will be denied.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION/APPROVAL OF 2022 AUDIT:**

Four accountants came out October 19, 2022 to get the audit started. Adair & Evans uses a portal for uploading files, which makes the process much simpler.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION OF OAKHILL PLOT INVENTORY:**

District Manager Arthur Gardner said that, according to Oakhill Foreman Robert Ellis, the remaining plot inventory at Oakhill is likely 15% less than the 482

plots as reported on the handout given to trustees. This is due to underground granite and means that, based on current burial rates, Oakhill has about 8-10 years of inventory remaining. Gardner said developing more ground needs to be a priority. The simplest way to develop more land is to fill in the culvert area between already developed land and the expansion area.

HR Generalist Stephen Cloeters has been doing online research into alternatives to traditional ground burials. Family ossuary benches and pillars could be an option.

Trustee Lois Betty suggested getting a landscape architect to develop a plan for new niches and to help give direction for a master plan. Chairman David Nemeth suggested paying a company to put together three different scenarios for development, but to not go overboard with the expenses. Trustee Belva Bare stated the District should have a credit with QK. Trustee Nemeth suggested looking at the whole expansion area for the master plan so that roads are built in the areas where they'll be needed.

Water expenses at Oakhill are increasing, per the handout given to the Board. The water treatment plant near the cemetery does not put its water through a third treatment stage, which makes it ineligible to be distributed as reclaimed water.

#### **REPORT/DISCUSSION OF CEMETERY MAPPING SOFTWARE PROGRESS:**

PlotBox underestimated the scope of work they would have to do to map the District's cemeteries. The cost of the entire project has gone up over the course of five years, from \$136,900 to \$138,960, which includes the initial Project Fees and the Annual Subscription Fees. Because the District chose PlotBox' *Subscription* option, a flat amount will be paid each month rather than a large amount frontloaded at the beginning of the agreement. The increased rate results in a \$34.33 monthly increase in the subscription payment.

Trustee Lois Betty and Board Chair David Nemeth both expressed concern over the price increase and questioned why the vendor didn't get the price right. Trustee Betty questioned whether the vendor was in over his head. It was determined that the District should proceed despite the price increase.

#### **REPORT/DISCUSSION/APPROVAL ON GOPHER AND GROUND SQUIRREL ABATEMENT:**

DM Gardner informed the Board that Operations Manager Ronnie Ramirez had spoken to his pest control provider, who told him that he had a natural way to handle ground pests and that he would share his technique with him.

#### **REPORT/DISCUSSION/APPROVAL OF GSRMA TRUE-UP FOR 2021-2022:**

Golden State Risk Management Authority has sent a true-up statement because the District's payroll for 2021-2022 exceeded its estimate and an additional \$5,653 is owed. The Board advised DM Gardner to pay the owed amount now rather than wait until next year.

#### **REPORT/DISCUSSION/APPROVAL OF EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS POLICY:**

A new policy regarding speaking with the media was discussed. Trustee Lois Betty moved to adopt it, Trustee Candy Talley seconded, and all were in favor: David Nemeth, aye; Candy Talley, aye; Lois Betty, aye; and Belva Bare, aye.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION/APPROVAL OF AGING REPORT AND TERMS OF AGREEMENT TO PURCHASE BURIAL RIGHTS:**

The auditor pointed out that the District had a very large aging report, meaning that a large number of account receivable are well past due. A discussion ensued on who monitors Accounts Receivable and what the standard process is for handling delinquent accounts. The District's contract states that the District may keep all monies if a contract is cancelled because it is more than six months delinquent. DM Arthur Gardner will look into the Health & Safety Code to see if this is permissible. Trustee Belva Bare raised a question on the accuracy of the report because it seemed to show her as being delinquent on her account. Mr. Gardner said he would follow up for the next board meeting.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION/APPROVAL ON OPERATIONS STAFFING LEVELS:**

District Manager Arthur Gardner reported that District operations staffing has stayed level while the workload continues to increase due to more burials. The cemeteries look good, but should the emphasis be placed on maintaining the grounds or conserving funds. The Board reviewed a handout the projected the budget impact if a weekend groundskeeper were added to the current staff.

Trustee Lois Betty put forward the idea of not having a full-time employee at North Fork Cemetery. Instead, someone would work part time and would focus on office tasks. Trustee Belva Bare suggested adding an employee who would work as a *floater* and split time between Arbor Vitae and Calvary. Chair David Nemeth suggested now is not a good time to consider this. Trustee Betty suggested to shelve the discussion until 2023's planning meeting.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION/APPROVAL OF BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS:**

This item was shelved until the December 2022 regular Board meeting in the interest of time.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION ON I.T., INTERNET, AND SECURITY CAMERAS:**

It was reported that there is no overlap between internet services provided by Attitude Online and iCityWork. The MCD website is operating properly.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION OF MOSQUITO & VECTOR REPORT:**

Nothing to report.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION ON CEMETERY SECURITY REPORT:**

Zaks Security has been overstating the number of stops they've been performing each month for at least the last two years. DM Arthur Gardner has notified them of the overage and was told the vendor would provide a credit.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISIONS ON INVESTMENTS FOR E.C. AND PRE-NEED AS PER SANDRA WHEELER/STIFEL INVESTMENTS IF NEEDED:**

Board Chair David Nemeth reported an October 14<sup>th</sup> conversation with Sandra Wheeler and he reported on recent investments. Bond yields are up.

**ADJOURNMENT:** 8:35 p.m.