



MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING OF MARCH 7, 2023

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE MADERA CEMETERY DISTRICT, HELD TUESDAY, MARCH 7, 2023 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
RONNIE RAMIREZ – OPERATIONS MANAGER
STEPHEN CLOETERS – H.R. GENERALIST
FRED VERDUZCO – MAINTENANCE SPECIALIST
CELESTE VOYLES – TRUSTEE APPLICANT

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairperson Candy Talley called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL OF BOARD:

Chairperson Candy Talley took roll of the Board. Trustees David Nemeth, Lois Betty, Candy Talley, and Belva Bare were present.

PLEDGE TO THE FLAG:

Trustee Applicant Celeste Voyles presented the flag. Following the pledge, all present stepped outside to look at the tree and gravesites that Kathy Boria and Rodonna Betts had brought to the Board's attention in the meeting of the Board on January 24, 2023.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

CONSENT CALENDAR:

Trustee Belva Bare moved to approve the consent calendar and Trustee David Nemeth seconded. All were in favor.

Chairperson Candy Talley asked for clarification on how to read the Trial Balance in the financial reports.

RECESS TO CLOSED SESSION:

Chairperson Candy Talley asked for a closed session. Afterword she instructed that the record show that no action was taken.

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

Operations Manager Ronnie Ramirez reported that he had consulted with a pest control expert on gopher control. The recommended process involves inserting small crushed rocks into gopher holes rather than using chemicals or traps.

A tree was blown over at Oakhill Cemetery and damaged a section of fence. Also at Oakhill, the air conditioning unit was replaced. The old unit was 25 years old.

REPORT/DISCUSSION OF NEW DISTRICT OFFICE AND ARBOR VITAE

MAUSOLEUMS PROJECT:

District Manager Arthur Gardner reported that plan check was almost done. He asked the Board whether they wanted to hold a groundbreaking ceremony for the office. The answer was no.

REPORT/DISCUSSION OF FURNISHINGS & DÉCOR FOR MADERA CEMETERY

DISTRICT OFFICE:

District Manager Arthur Gardner said the new building will have a mail slot in the front of the building through which payments can be deposited. Wire racks and a work table will be needed for the supply room and one new desk will be purchased.

A discussion was had on the types of chairs to buy for the offices and for the board room. DM Gardner will check out surplus chair outlets.

Trustee Belva Bare said that the current computers are old and should be replaced. New computers will be needed for the arrangement rooms.

The question of a new table and video screen for the board room was discussed. Board Chair Candy Talley suggested DM Arthur Gardner look into trading the current table for a larger one that can accommodate ten people. Discussion on purchasing a short-cast laser projector will be held at a later date.

Art for the new office's walls was discussed. Chairperson Candy Talley suggested doing something with Madera County Arts Council. Trustee Lois Betty suggested Mr. Gardner contact the MCAC to see if we could display art on loan.

REPORT/DISCUSSION OF CALVARY SOLAR PROJECT:

District Manager Arthur Gardner reported that the solar system construction at Calvary is done and that we are waiting on PG&E to connect the system to the grid.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON ARBOR VITAE SOLAR PROJECT:

A motion was made by Trustee David Nemeth to add to the agenda a discussion and decision on signing a solar Power Purchase Agreement for Arbor Vitae Cemetery. Nemeth proposed that upcoming changes to California's Net Energy Metering (NEM) program in April of 2023, and the upcoming deadlines for signing a PPP and completing the process with the finance company, constitute an emergency and that

therefore this item should be added to the agenda. Trustee Lois Betty seconded and all were in favor.

District Manager Arthur Gardner reported that he had solicited an updated proposal for a power purchase agreement from Greenday Finance for Arbor Vitae Cemtery. The proposal came back with greater savings than the original and Gardner recommended the Board approve moving forward. Trustee David Nemeth so moved, Trustee Belva Bare seconded, and all voted in favor: Nemeth, aye; Bare, aye; Betty, aye; and Talley, aye.

REPORT/DISCUSSION OF CEMETERY MAPPING SOFTWARE:

District Manager Arthur Gardner said things are moving along. He and Office Assistant Kerry Smith had a teleconference call with PlotBox and MCD's IT contractor, Markus Schmucki. There are some inconsistencies with MCD's data which are creating problems and delays with the data migration.

REPORT/DISCUSSION ON ELECTRIC VEHICLES :

Arthur Gardner reported there were some delays with the certification of the Polaris GEM-6 cart for the 2023 model year, but that has been resolved. The application is now under senior review.

REPORT/DISCUSSION OF OAKHILL MASTER PLAN:

District Manager Arthur Gardner handed out a document from QK regarding services they could provide to assist with the development of the expansion area at Oakhill and reviewed it with the Board.

REPORT/DISCUSSION ON TRUSTEE LIFE INSURANCE:

Arthur Gardner informed the Board that Lincoln Benefit Life had removed from their updated policy the requirement that trustees work a minimum of 30 hours a week. They also agreed to pay the death benefit for Trustee Maurice Cappelluti.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON DATE FOR PLANNING MEETING:

It was decided that the annual Planning Meeting of the Board of Trustees would be held April 26 at 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the home of Chairperson Candy Talley. The Board will hold a closed session at 9:00 a.m. to discuss the Employment Agreement with District Manager Arthur Gardner.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION/APPROVAL OF INCREASING TRUSTEE
COMPENSATION:**

The last time the Board was granted an increase in compensation was 2004. Trustee David Nemeth suggested that because trustees who travel long distance for Board meetings cannot be reimbursed for mileage, it would be appropriate to increase Trustee compensation the maximum amount possible. Approving such an increase would require a public hearing. David Nemeth moved to have DM Arthur Gardner set up a public hearing, Trustee Lois Betty seconded, and all were in favor.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/APPROVAL OF UPDATED MADERA CEMETERY

DISTRICT BYLAWS:

It was agreed that Trustees needed more time to review and assess the updated bylaws.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/APPROVAL OF MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT POLICY:

DM Arthur Gardner had been directed to draft a policy that set Trustee mileage reimbursement to always align with the IRS' reimbursement rate. He reported that such a policy already existed and, thus, there was no need for a new policy.

REPORT/DISCUSSION ON WEEKEND PHONE:

District Manager Arthur Gardner raised the question of whether office staff should continue to take home the District's cell phone over the weekends. Trustee Nemeth asked how many calls come in on the weekend. Gardner answered maybe two or three and only one funeral home calls on the weekends. Gardner suggested the District could simply send a copy of the services calendar to the funeral homes. Trustee David Nemeth so moved to stop using the weekend phone, Trustee Belva Bare seconded, and all were in favor.

REPORT/DISCUSSION ON POLICY ON INTERMENT RIGHTS AMONG SIBLINGS (UNANIMOUS OR MAJORITY DECISION?):

DM Arthur Gardner asked the Board to consider whether the District should continue to require unanimity among surviving siblings or whether a majority vote among siblings would be suitable for making decision. The Board directed to keep requiring a unanimous decision.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON HOW MANY PLAQUES ARE ALLOWED ON A GRAVE:

The Board asked to place this item on the next agenda.

REPORT/DISCUSSION ON PROPERTY ADJACENT TO ARBOR VITAE, 780 N I ST:

District Manager Arthur Gardner reported that the seller of the property did not like the District's offer of \$50,000. Trustee David Nemeth said he'd done the math and the cost per acre for the parcel was around \$240,000. The Board decided not to make another offer on the property.

REPORT/DISCUSSION ON CEMETERY SECURITY REPORT:

District Manager Arthur Gardner said that the District office had received several complaints about noise, food, alcohol, and large gatherings at Calvary Cemetery. The security company never seems to see anything. He suggested the District consider hiring someone to work weekends to do light groundskeeping and to police the grounds. A short discussion was had and it was decided to look into this further.

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

Nothing to report.

ADJOURNMENT: 8:50 p.m.