



# MINUTES

OF THE **REGULAR BOARD MEETING** OF THE **BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
OF THE **MADERA CEMETERY DISTRICT**  
**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 2023, 5:30 p.m.**  
**1301 ROBERTS AVE., MADERA, CA 93637**

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE MADERA CEMETERY DISTRICT, HELD TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 2023 AT 5:30 P.M. AT THE ARBOR VITAE CEMETERY LOCATED AT 1301 ROBERTS AVE., MADERA, CA 93637

**TRUSTEES PRESENT:**

CANDY TALLEY  
LOIS BETTY  
BELVA BARE  
DAVID NEMETH  
CELESTE VOYLES

**PUBLIC/EMPLOYEES PRESENT:**

ARTHUR GARDNER - DISTRICT MANAGER  
RONNIE RAMIREZ – OPERATIONS MANAGER  
TRACY ISAAK – OFFICE TECHNICIAN  
STEPHEN CLOETERS – H.R. GENERALIST  
IGNACIO BECERRA - SUPERINTENDENT

**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 (via ZOOM), Lois Betty, Belva Bare, and Celeste Voyles were present.

**PLEDGE TO THE FLAG:**

Trustee Lois Betty led the room in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

None

**CONSENT CALENDAR:**

Trustee Celeste Voyles stated that expenditures for the new office should be booked as assets and not as expenses. The next Board meeting will be January 23, 2024. Trustee Belva Bare so moved to approve the Consent Calendar, Trustee Celeste Voyles seconded, and all were in favor.

**RECESS TO CLOSED SESSION:**

Chairperson Candy Talley asked for a closed session.

**RECONVENE TO OPEN SESSION - REPORT OF ANY ACTION TAKEN:**

Chair Candy Talley reported that no action had been taken in closed session.

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

Operations Manager Ronnie Ramirez reported that things are going well with the new office construction. There was an accident involving a lowering device and he is seeing if it can be fixed or if it will be necessary to purchase a new one.

Mr. Ramirez said that *día de muertos* went well at Calvary Cemetery. District Manager Arthur Gardner echoed that and said that he spoke with a family who had raised concerns in 2022 and that they were very pleased with the changes in 2023. Next year, Calvary will post signs at the entrances with a phone number for the public to call when they need a ride around the grounds.

There were cows on the grounds at North Fork Cemetery on Thanksgiving. Groundskeeper Joe Rios went in response, but the rancher was already taking care of things. The cattle left a lot of hoofprints. Trustee Lois Betty asked about the cattle guards that used to be at the gate.

The bronze name bars that used to be on the Arbor Vitae ossuary have been removed and the names engraved directly on the granite ossuary. The bronze vendor, Matthews, has been very slow in delivering product. The Board requested seeing some alternatives to Matthews' products at the December planning meeting.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISIONS ON DISTRICT OFFICE, CALVARY & ARBOR VITAE SOLAR, PLOTBOX CEMETERY MAPPING, AND ELECTRIC VEHICLES PROJECTS:**

District Manager Arthur Gardner reported that the parking lot of the new office was done, interior lights are almost done, restroom flooring installation is underway and the restroom fixtures will be installed soon.

Regarding solar, Gardner said the District finally received credit from the Calvary solar installation. It was large enough that the District will not have to pay anything towards the PG&E bill for several months. The solar contractor had recently been out to take a look at Arbor Vitae for its planned solar installation.

Gardner said that he's working on cleaning up the data for Plotbox.

The District received a \$20,000 check from San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District for the 6-seater cart at Arbor Vitae. The cart for Oakhurst should be delivered soon.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON COMMISSIONING ART FOR BOARD ROOM OF NEW DISTRICT OFFICE:**

Trustee David Nemeth reported that he'd met with the Oakhurst artist discussed in the October meeting regarding art for the board room. The price for one painting of each of the District's five cemeteries would be \$2,500, which would include framing. Trustee Belva Bare moved to approve \$2,500 to commission the works, Trustee Lois Betty seconded, and all voted in favor.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON AGENDA FOR DECEMBER PLANNING MEETING:**

District Manager Arthur Gardner reviewed a list of potential agenda items for the December Planning Meeting and asked for the Board’s input. The Board asked Gardner to supply a list of four or five things he’s planning on focusing on in 2024. It was decided that the Board would meet at Chairperson Candy Talley’s house on December 5 to discuss the district manager’s evaluation, continuing education for the trustees, and to discuss the Policies and Procedures Manual.

The Board will then meet December 6 at The Pines Resort in Bass Lake to discuss property acquisition along the Highway 41 corridor, mountain employee evaluations, development of the 10 acres at Arbor Vitae (including a ground cremation area, Oakhill expansion and additional niches, Calvary niches, and the Policies and Procedures Manual.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON AMENDING EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK REGARDING SICK TIME ACCRUAL FOR PART-TIME EMPLOYEES:**

District Manager Arthur Gardner presented an amended version of the sick time policy adopted two months prior. California is requiring that employers provided 40 hours of sick leave for part-time employees, starting January 1, 2024, so the recently-created policy needs to be updated to comply with the law. Trustee Celeste Voyles so moved to approve the change and Trustee David Nemeth seconded. A vote was taken and all were in favor: David Nemeth, aye; Belva Bare, aye; Lois Betty, aye; Celeste Voyles, aye; and Candy Talley, aye.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION/APPROVAL OF LANGUAGE TO BE USED IN PROOF OF RESIDENCY POLICY:**

The Board reviewed proposed language for a policy regarding proof of residency. The Board approved of the language as presented and requested it be presented as a resolution in the next regular board meeting.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON SHIFTING EMPLOYEE PAY PERIODS SO PAY PERIODS END PRIOR TO PAY DAYS:**

District Manager Arthur Gardner explained the current status of pay periods and pay days in the District, e.g. payday fall on the last working day of the pay period. This creates some problems with sick days, vacation days, and absences because they are not reported in real time on employees’ pay stubs. He proposed changing pay days so that employees are paid seven days after the end of the pay period. This would allow for accurate reporting of hours worked and vacation and sick accruals on employee pay stubs. Board Chair Candy Talley said if this were approved, it would be something that would need to be explained to the employees. Gardner said the plan was to speak with each cemetery in person. Talley said it should start July 1, 2024. Trustee David Nemeth so moved to change the payroll schedule so that

paydays fall on the 7th and 22nd of each month, Trustee Lois Betty seconded, and all were in favor.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION ON CEMETERY SECURITY:**

Gatekeeper Ruben Guerra is working shorter hours because of the shorter days. Someone called because of youths drinking by the arbor at Calvary Cemetery.

**REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISIONS ON INVESTEMENTS FOR E.C. & PRE-NEED FUNDS WITH SANDRA WHEELER:**

Trustee David Nemeth reviewed an email exchange with Sandra Wheeler regarding investments.

**ADJOURNMENT:** 7:35 p.m.