



MINUTES

OF THE **REGULAR BOARD MEETING** OF THE **BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

OF THE **MADERA CEMETERY DISTRICT**

TUESDAY, JANUARY 30, 2024, 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, JANUARY 30, 2024 AT 5:30 P.M. AT THE NEW OFFICE BUILDING IN 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
ALEJANDRO COSIO – GROUNDSKEEPER II
DENNIS MEISNER

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, Belva Bare, and Celeste Voyles were present.

The consent calendar was erroneously not placed on the agenda. To place the an item the agenda after the agenda has been posted requires a vote by the Board if the Board determines that it is an emergency. Trustee Celeste Voyles motioned that the adding the consent calendar to the agenda constituted an emergency, Trustee David Nemeth seconded, and all trustees voted in favor. Trustee Belva Bare then moved to add the Consent Calendar to the agenda after the pledge of allegiance, Trustee David Nemeth seconded, and all voted in favor.

PLEDGE TO THE FLAG:

Board Chair Candy Talley led the room in the Pledge of Allegiance.

CONSENT CALENDAR:

Trustee Celeste Voyles asked for a correction in the Operations Report section of the November, 2023 minutes, with the insertion of the word *are* into a sentence. Trustee Lois Betty motioned to approve the November minutes with the aforementioned correction, Chair Candy Talley seconded, and all were in favor.

Trustee David Nemeth moved to approve the minutes from the December 5, 2023 Planning Meeting, Trustee Belva Bare seconded, and all were in favor.

Trustee Celeste Voyles pointed out that Trustee Lois Betty's name was misspelled in the minutes from the December 6, 2023 planning meeting. Chair Candy Talley stated that page 2 of the minutes said that the Board had asked for the master plan for the 10 acres at Arbor Vitae to be on the agenda for this meeting, but it's not. Trustee Lois Betty moved to approve the December 6 minutes with the correction, Trustee David Nemeth seconded and all were in favor.

Trustee Belva Bare asked questions about the payment of December sales tax (paid in January), whether the safety budget had been increased (no), what the \$1,006 payment to Madera County Environmental Health was for (hazardous waste disposal), the amount of petty cash in the trial balance (Office Technician Tracy Issak will look into it), and outstanding checks (auditor is waiting until July to address when the switch is made to Quickbooks). Trustee David Nemeth moved to approve the Consent Calendar, Trustee Belva Bare seconded, and all were in favor.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

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.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/APPROVAL OF BOARD CHAIR, VICE CHAIR, AND SECRETARY:

Trustee Lois Betty moved to keep the officers of the Board the same as in 2023, i.e., Candy Talley as Chair, Lois Betty as Vice Chair, and Arthur Gardner as secretary. Trustee Celeste Voyles seconded and all voted unanimously in favor.

LOYALTY AFFIRMATION:

District Manager Arthur Gardner led the Trustees in reciting a loyalty affirmation. All trustees then signed the affirmation.

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

Board Chair Candy Talley asked Operations Manager Ronnie if he had anything to add to his written report, to which Mr. Ramirez said no and that all was good.

DISCUSSION/REPORT/APPROVAL OF LEASE AGREEMENT OF D&D AG SERVICES, LLC:

Dennis Meisner reported on how 2023 went and his plans for 2024. Calvary Cemetery's handling of Dia de los Muertos was a challenge for him because he was harvesting that day and the cars parked on the shoulder of the road prevented his harvesting machine from accessing the rows along the road. District Manager Arthur Gardner told him that he should expect that Calvary will continue to close to car traffic on that day in the future. Mr. Meisner proposed increasing the amount of the lease by \$1,000. He also asked if the trees along the north fence line could be trimmed to reduce the amount of shade on his vines. Trustee David Nemeth moved to approve the lease with Mr. Meisner's changes, Trustee Lois Betty seconded, and all were in favor. Arthur Gardner said he would start posting this agenda item in November in the future so the lease can be signed in advance.

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

District Manager Arthur Gardner said that the new office building still needs landscaping and some curbing to be done. He is thinking that sometime in April or May would be a good time to do a dedication ceremony and place a time capsule. Officials from the City and County would be invited, along with the public and funeral homes. Trustee Belva Bare suggested the Madera Chamber of Commerce be invited and they will send out alerts to local businesses and will provide ribbon-cutting services. Gardner gave credit to Operations Manager Ronnie Ramirez, Arbor Vitae Superintendent Ignacio Becerra, and to H.R. Generalist Stephen Cloeters for handling the bulk of the moving process.

Regarding solar, Gardner said the Arbor Vitae system is in the permitting stage.

Regarding Plotbox, the overhead views of the cemeteries with grid overlays are available and a live beta version is available. There is still a lot of cleanup work to do with the data.

The electric cart for Oakhill Cemetery should be arriving soon.

Arbor Vitae will be hosting its annual safety meeting in February.

REPORT/DISCUSSION ON CAPC MEETING IN SAN DIEGO, MARCH 14-16, 2024:

Airline tickets have been purchased and rooms booked. Trustee Belva Bare will leave on Wednesday and Trustees David Nemeth, Lois Betty, and Candy Talley will leave on Thursday. District Manager Arthur Gardner will have the District vehicle and will provide ground transportation.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON ART FOR BOARD ROOM, LOBBY, ARRANGEMENT ROOMS, AND HALLWAY:

Trustee David Nemeth shared photos of some of the paintings that had been commissioned for the board room. He said the artist would be at the district office the next day to go over frames. District Manager Arthur Gardner reported that art is now

hanging in the lobby and the arrangement rooms courtesy of the Madera County Arts Council.

REPORT/DISCUSSION ON MEETING WITH COUNTY SUPERVISOR BOBBY MACAULAY REGARDING ANNEXATION OF LAND ALONG HWY 40 CORRIDOR:

District Manager Arthur Gardner said he thought the meeting with County Supervisor Bobby Macaulay and Melissa Dasilva was good and productive. Gardner, Trustee David Nemeth, and H.R. Generalist Stephen Cloeters attended. They discussed how *zones of benefit* could be used to assess taxes differently for different parcels of land. Macaulay suggested arranging a meeting with homebuilder McCaffrey and said the annexation needs the support of property owners and that builders are some of the largest land owners. The District would need to do a feasibility study to look at what needs to be done and the cost. Macaulay said he is willing to help and suggested that the District seek out a donation of land for the cemetery.

H.R. Generalist Stephen Cloeters added that he felt the meeting was insightful and that they also discussed water issues in Oakhurst. The water treatment plant near Oakhill Cemetery is going to be updated and it may be beneficial to both MCD and the treatment plant if the District purchased reclaimed water. Macaulay also said that sewers would soon be installed near the District's West Lake property in Oakhurst, which could help boot the value of the land.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/APPROVAL OF PROOF OF RESIDENCY POLICY:

In the regular meeting of the Board in November, 2023, the Board had approved language to adopt a policy regarding documentation needed to prove residency and obtain resident pricing for services. The policy was presented to the Board as Resolution 147. Trustee Belva Bare moved to approve, Trustee David Nemeth seconded, and all were in favor: Candy Talley, aye; Belva Bare, aye; Celeste Voyles, aye; Lois Betty, aye; and David Nemeth, aye.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/APPROVAL ON PURCHASING NEW COLUMBARIA FOR CALVARY'S ARBOR VIEW NICHES:

H.R. Generalist Stephen Cloeters reviewed problems the District has been having with mono bars for mausoleum crypts and niches from Matthews. He showed the Board samples of the mono bars ordered from Southern California Bronze for comparison. SoCal Bronze's product has a similar look and is half the price. The District will start ordering from SoCal Bronze.

District Manager Arthur Gardner presented the quote from Berry Construction for four niches to be added to the Arbor View niches at Calvary. Because some of the costs are fixed costs, the District's cost per niche would be less than that of the previous niches purchased in 2021. Trustee David Nemeth said if the District waits, the cost will go up. The District has the funds now and should move ahead with the purchase. Nemeth moved to approve the purchase, Trustee Lois Betty seconded, and all were in favor.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON ADDING \$2,000 TO BUDGET FOR PURCHASE OF REPLACEMENT LOWERING DEVICE:

District Manager Arthur Gardner stated a used, replacement lowering device had already been purchased and that the expense should be added to the budget after the fact. Trustee David Nemeth moved to amend the budget, Trustee Belva Bare seconded, and all were in favor.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON CONTRACTING WITH RKS BUSINESS SERVICES FOR QUICKBOOKS ACQUISITION AND ADOPTION:

The Board looked over a proposal from RKS Business Services for licensing, training, and conversion from SAGE Daceasy to QuickBooks. Trustee Celeste Voyles expressed concern over the proposal. She questioned why proposed use of QuickBooks Enterprise because it goes beyond the District's needs. She questioned whether the vendor was familiar with the working of a cemetery and warned against using the online version of the software. Board Chair Candy Talley directed the district manager to check with the District's auditor to see what he says.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON NEW SIGNAGE USING THE "NO" SYMBOL:

District Manager Arthur Gardner showed the Board a rough mock-up of a sign to be posted at the cemetery gates that uses symbols to convey the general rules rather than a lot of verbiage. Members of the Board commented that symbols would be cleaner and quicker to read and there would be no language problem. Trustee David Nemeth made a motion to approve new signage using the "no" symbol, Trustee Belva Bare seconded, and Trustee Celeste Voyles and Chair Candy Talley approved. Trustee Lois Betty abstained from voting and felt the signage was not dignified.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON RECORDS RETENTION:

District Manager Arthur Gardner requested this item be tabled until the next meeting.

REPORT/DISCUSSION/DECISION ON THE MISSIONS' REQUEST FOR TREE TRIMMING:

Dana Butcher, the property manager for The Missions property to the east of Arbor Vitae Cemetery, has emailed the District requesting the District trim back trees near the property line because the needles from the evergreens create a mess on their side of the fence. District Manager Arthur Gardner stated that the trees have been in place for a long time, well before any buildings went up, and that a small number of cars are affected. The email from Dana Butcher suggested the District hire an arborist and stated that they have one they would recommend.

Chairperson Candy Talley stated that The Missions could do as they please on their side of the fence, including hiring and paying an arborist. Trustee Lois Betty directed the district manager to check with County Council.

REPORT/DISCUSSION ON CEMETERY SECURITY:

Shots were fired at Calvary Cemetery on December 23, a Saturday afternoon. Operations Manager Ronnie Ramirez said he'd spoken with the sheriff's department and was told to call them if there are any issues. A discussion ensued on installing additional security cameras, including one like in use at Oakhill Cemetery that takes clear pictures of license plates.

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

Trustee David Nemeth reviewed recent investments.

ADJOURNMENT: 8:13 p.m.